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 Text: Psalm 150
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 Preacher: Stephen Taylor

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I love the story about the older woman was well known for her faith who talked about Jesus a lot. She would often go out on the front porch & yell, "Praise the Lord!" but her next door neighbour, who was an atheist, would shout back, "No way, because there ain't no God!"

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Well this older lady was quite poor and so one day her neighbour decided to prove his point by buying a large bag of groceries and placing it at her door. The next morning, the woman went to the front veranda and seeing the groceries, said, "Praise the Lord!"

The neighbour then stepped out from behind a tree and said, "You're crazy, there ain't no God. I brought those groceries". To which the woman started praising the Lord even more. She turned her eyes upward toward God and said "Praise the Lord. Lord you not only have sent me food but you made the devil pay for it!"

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Now Psalm 150 is all about praising the Lord. It starts with praise and ends with praise. And 13 times in just 6 verses the writer of the Psalm tells us to praise the Lord, even commands us to praise the Lord. And if you flick back to the previous four psalms, Psalms 146 to 149 they are all about praise as well. They all start exactly the same way "Praise the Lord!" So the book of Psalms certainly finishes with this crescendo of praise. Praise to the Lord.

So as we begin this morning can I ask you how often do you praise the Lord? How often do we sing or pray or declare our hallelujahs? Yes sometimes in Church but do you ever do it in the car or at school or at home? Yes when things are going well but do you ever praise God when things are bleak? Yes when you have received answers to your prayers but do you ever praise him when he has said no to your requests? This Psalm is going to say to you and to me that everyone should praise the Lord everyday in everyway, everywhere they are for everything. Praising the Lord is to be central to who we are and what we do. Let's see

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1. The where of praise! (verse 1)

Verse 1 starts with a bang. "Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary, praise him in his mighty heavens". Praise God in the sanctuary. The sanctuary was the holy place where God met with his people. Originally it was the tent of meeting, the Tabernacle. Then Solomon built the Temple and so from there on the focus of the worship for the people of God was in that building. But in the New Testament we read that Jesus is the place where believers meet with God. For Jesus was God tabernacling among us. So when two or three gather in Jesus name, God is truly in our midst. So worship and praise is to take place whenever we are in the presence of God, whenever Jesus is with us.

So today we can praise God in his sanctuary at Church or at home. On the beach or on the soccer field. You can praise Him when you meet together as a family, you praise Him when you walk with another along Bar beach. You praise Him when you catch a glimpse of the sunset. You can praise him wherever you are on earth *and in heaven*. For it continues...

“Praise Him in his mighty heavens”. The book of Revelation opens up the lid on heaven so that we can see some of the things that are going on right now and what are the people of God doing in heaven? Singing holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! They are singing, they are worshipping, they are bowing down before the Lord, they are praising Him. So friends praise God on earth and in heaven and in all places in between. God’s glory fills the entire universe, so let’s make sure His praise also fills the entire universe as well.

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So where is God to be praised? Below and above; on earth and in the heavens. God is to be praised everywhere, everywhere. So what could you do this week to make sure you raise your praise? How can we praise God at home? What could we do to trigger a reminder to praise God in the car? When you go for a walk? When you come home from uni or school? There is no place that we will go to this week where we can’t praise the Lord!

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2. The why of praise! Psalm 150:2

But why? Why praise God? Verse 2, *“Praise Him for His acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.”* There are two main reasons why we should praise God everywhere. And the first reason is because of His acts of power, because of what He has already done in this world.

Now maybe you might go home today and start writing a list of some of the acts of power you know about that the Lord has done. Let me just get you started. Creation, making the world, the stars, the mountains, the animals with just a word. What about making us, putting us together in our mother’s womb. What about the Exodus? The crossing of the Jordan? The defeating of his enemies. The establishment of David’s kingdom. What about the exile and the restoration of the nation of Israel? What about God’s salvation, the cross and the resurrection? What about the growth of the church to cover the entire earth?

And what about how he has worked in your life, saving you, forgiving your sins, answering your prayers, healing your illnesses, giving you the word and His Holy Spirit, caring for you in so so many ways. Why there are plenty of things to praise the Lord for in his acts of power. But these act of power also reveal to us what God is like, the true and trustworthy character of our God.

So we can also praise Him for his surpassing greatness, for who he is. For his power, holiness, love, wisdom, justice, grace, mercy and so on. Maybe that’s the next list you could work on. All the things that God is like that you could praise Him for. And if you are having some trouble getting started, just look at the last few psalms in the book of Psalms.

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Psalm 145:3 says, *“Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; His **greatness** no one can fathom.”*

Psalm 147:5 *“Great is our Lord & **mighty in power**; His **understanding** has no limit.”*

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Because when you think about it is not just about what He does, it is more about who he is. God isn’t our ticket to heaven, he is our treasure, the one whom we can know personally who is of ultimate value. God is not a means to a greater end, He is the greater end. God is not just opening up for us the journey of the life, he is the way, the truth and the life. And so

when we meditate on what God has done and who God is we will find ourselves with an endless source of reasons why we should praise Him.

In short we praise God everywhere for everything he has done and everything he is to us. And thirdly we are to praise him in every way. Which is why the psalm now turns to the

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3. The How of praise. Psalm 150:3-5

³“Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre,⁴ praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe, ⁵ praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals”.

It’s almost as if the Psalmist is saying it doesn’t matter what you use, grab it and praise the Lord with it. If the trumpet is nearby, blast out the call to worship. If you only have something softer like the harp and lyre, use that, it will do. If you want to dance or tap your feet, that’s fine. If you want to use some classical musicians, with their string section then go on let them join in. But if you only have those loud rock band type cymbals and drums, include them as well!

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Use whatever instrument you have in your life to praise the Lord. Use the organ, use the piano, use the guitar, use the drums, use the trumpet. Now in those days the trumpet was used to call people to battle and to begin the great festivals but here we are being encouraged to use the trumpet to praise the Lord. The tambourine was used in a victory celebration, well here it is saying use the tambourine to praise the Lord. The pipe, the flute, the lyre, and the harp, these were instruments that would have been used by everyday folks in Israel in the common situations of life. Well use them not just for your parties and celebrations but to praise the Lord.

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And praise isn’t just sweet and melodic sometimes at times you also have to pump up the volume. So get out the cymbals, the drums and the brass and make a joyful noise to the Lord. You even praise God through dance. Through tapping your feet, through swaying in time with the music. The idea is that the whole of our mind and the whole of our body can be used to praise God.

The breath is used to blow the trumpet and flute, the fingers are used with the harp and strings, the whole hand hits the tambourine, the feet and arms move in rhythm. Praise and worship is engaging our whole being. It involves our head, our heart and our hands. Music especially loud and vibrant music leaves no space to think or feel. It overtakes us. That’s what praise should do. Praise overtakes our whole being. It fills every part of who we are with praise to the God who has given us every part of that life.

Praise is more than just using your voice. It is your whole being, so if you can’t sing then please don’t stand there as if you can no longer praise God. Use your voice, your feet, your hands, your fingers, your mind and your heart.

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So when we are praising God we turn off the mobile phone, we don’t even let it distract us with a buzz. We leave our troubles and doubts behind. We stop thinking about what will be for lunch when we get home. We take our mind off where we are going to go after Church.

We remove all the distractions that will get in the way of praise. We set aside sometime before the service starts to fill all we have with the praise of God. He is worthy of our praise. It is fitting to give everything to him in praise. So whether we are at Church or at home we will throw everything including the kitchen sink at praising the Lord.

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 I like how the great preacher Charles Spurgeon put it in his commentary on the Psalms, *“Let the clash of the loudest music be the Lord’s: let the joyful clang of the loftiest notes be all for Him. Praise has beaten the tambourine, swept the harp, and sounded the trumpet, and now for a last effort, awakening the most heavy of slumberers, and startling the most indifferent of onlookers, she dashes together the disks of brass, and with sounds both loud and high proclaims the glories of the Lord.”*

Everyway you can, everywhere you are praise God for everything he has done.

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4. But who should praise the Lord? Psalm 150:6

“Let everything that has breath praise the LORD”.

Everyone! Everything that has breathe. Not merely the priests and Levites, nor just the congregation, but all living creatures are included in the choir of choirs. Not just the ministers and musicians but everyone. Not just the happy, the content but everyone. Not just the old but the young. *“Let everything that has breathe praise the Lord. Praise the Lord”.* God has given each of us breath; we’re called now to breathe His praise. You see this song begins and ends with the command to praise the Lord because we are to be a people of praise.

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But it is not just us that should praise the Lord. The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands. And even animals, everything that has breathe is to praise the Lord. Everything that has been created by God should respond in an appropriate way and praise the Lord. We all are to join in the chorus of life. We don’t sing alone we sing with our fellow believers, along with the animals, even along with all creation.

But it is more to it than that. We are to lead others in praise. Somehow those of us who know the Lord are to teach, to lead, to model this sort of praise to those who don’t know the Lord. Praise is so much to be on our lips that the birds, the animals, those creatures that live and breathe all around us will notice that what defines us as human beings is that not only are we made in God’s image but we spend our time praising our maker. Thankful for what he has done for us. Worshipping our mighty, mighty King. Friends let everything that has breathe praise the Lord. Everyone. Everyway. Everywhere. Everything.

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5. But when? When should we praise the Lord?

Well our Psalm doesn’t say when! But I think the answer to that question is pretty obvious. All the time. When you feel like it and when you don’t feel like? When things are going well and when life has turned disastrous. On those special days and on those ordinary days. When you have a trumpet and when you just have a voice. When you remember God’s mighty acts, when you ponder who he is, when you are in church, when you are looking up at the heaven’s, praise should be continually on our lips.

What does the book of Hebrews chapter 13 say? *“through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name.”*

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Through Jesus. He is the culmination of God’s revelation and he should be the culmination of our praise. Jesus is where all the promises of God come to fruition and so Jesus should be the one that our praise keeps coming back. For it is Jesus who gave us life in the beginning and offers us eternal life. He is the one who is the way, the truth and the life and so as we go along the way, as we reflect on the truth as we out the life that we have been graciously given. Jesus becomes the centre of everything and especially the centre of our praise.

So we should praise the Lord every day, in fact we should praise Him every moment of everyday. So as you wake up each morning each day, praise the Lord. As you walk around the garden and you see the colours and the flowers, praise the Lord. As you open up the word of God, reminding you that He speaks to you and hearing about who God is and what He has done, praise the Lord. As you consider the salvation of God – that he would take upon His Son’s body the sins of the world, praise the Lord. As you recall there is only one true God, praise the Lord. And at the end of the day as you look back at what God has done for you, praise the Lord.

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Matthew Henry once said, *“We should never begin a work without prayer and we should never end it without thanksgiving and praise.”* In short at the heart of all we do and all we are should be a joyous and heartfelt praise of the Lord.

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I don’t know whether you ever saw the movie called "When Harry met Sally." At the end of the movie, Harry tells Sally, "I love it that you’re the first person I want to talk to when I get up in the morning. And you’re the last person I want to talk to before I go to bed at night." I wonder if we would say that about our God? "Lord, you’re the first person I want to talk to when I get up in the morning. And you’re the last one I want to talk to before I go to sleep at night. I love you, Jesus. Thank you Lord. Praise the Lord. Be my personal Lord and Saviour." *Praise the Lord. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.*

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We are to be praising God at all times as we roam this earth because when we leave here we will be ushered into heaven where we will continue our praise forever in the presence of the Lord. For in the book of Revelation when God opens up the heavens so we get a glimpse of what is going on there right now we read these words from Revelation 5:13 *“¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honour and glory and power, for ever and ever!’* We praise here on earth in preparation for an eternity of praise there in heaven.

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And I think that is what the book of Psalms has been heading towards from the very beginning. Psalm 1 was about walking in the way of the Lord. Following his words. Living his way. And that doesn’t mean that everything will work out for you. Because throughout the Psalms we have been taken to the most wonderful mountaintops and we have walked through the most difficult valleys. We have seen God as light. And we have experienced the

absence of God as darkness. We have been happy and sad. Thrilled and disappointed. Sick and well. Young and old. Blessed and persecuted.

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But this is where the journey of the Psalms, the journey of life is headed. Praise. Praising the Lord. The goal of our lives is to praise the Lord. This psalm is not really the end of the Psalms but the summing up of the book of Psalms. The place we need to get to if we are going to enjoy our lives to the full is the place that no matter what life throws at us, we will find ourselves praising God.

Now this is not a shutting your eyes to the facts of life. This is a realisation that in the midst of all life's ups and downs we worship a God who is mighty in power. We worship a God who is loving and gracious and full of mercy. So we can trust Him, really trust him in the midst of all of life. And one way we do that is to keep the praise of father, son and Holy Spirit continually on our lips.

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Our goal is to see everyone praise the Lord everyday, in every way, everywhere for everything. But do you know for me to do that I need a **much** bigger heart for the purposes of God's praise. I need the gospel to expand my palate, multiply my taste buds, and increase my capacity to enjoy the rich variety of experiences I am going to have throughout my life.

I will need to know that in the beginning God created the heaven's and the earth and in the end he will roll up the heaven's and earth like a scroll. I will need to remember the depths that God plummeted in order to send his one and only son to secure my salvation. I will need this good news to fill every fibre of my body. Every part of my brain. Every chamber of my heart.

In short the more my life is filled with God, the more praise will overflow from every part of my body. For praise is the response, the best response, the only response we can make when we ponder who God is and what he has done for us.

So friends praise the Lord everyday in every way, everywhere for everything. Lets pray

Martin Luther once said, "We must read, sing, preach, write and compose verse, and whenever it was helpful and beneficial I would let all the bells peal, all the organs thunder, and everything sound that could sound." Let us do that with our last song but let us do that throughout the rest of the day. Let us be people of praise.