

# TRINITY

BIBLE CHURCH DALLAS

The Sermon

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Psalm 150

"The Point of Grace"

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TRANSCRIPT

Psalm 50 is a famous one because it's the last one, right? So, open your Bible, please, to Psalm 150, the very final psalm. We all know Psalm 1. We all are familiar with the way the Psalter opens with that stark contrast between the righteous and the wicked, right, "Blessed is the man who walks in the way of the Lord and whose meditation is on His word, and who's like a tree and not like the wicked who are like shaft blown away," right? That's the opening of the Psalms. Spurgeon calls it a sentry, a guard that says if you're going to enter here, if you're going to worship here, there's only two ways to live. We all know and love the message of Psalm 1, the problem is is that's lost in psalm, he has complete copyright on it.

So, in this wayward series, you're going to have some guests on a few Sundays this summer. As they preach the Psalms, I thought Psalm 150 is the most appropriate way to begin, although it is the final Psalm. So let me read it to you, and I think you'll quickly see why the Psalms open the way they do and why the book closes the way it does with this very clarifying word about what it is to praise the Lord. So, let's read Psalm 150.

"Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty expanse. Praise Him for His mighty deeds; praise Him according to His excellent greatness. Praise Him with trumpet sound; praise Him with harp and lyre. Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; praise Him with stringed

instruments and pipe. Praise Him with loud cymbals; praise Him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath shall praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!"

[Prayer] Our Father, would You open our eyes to behold wonderful things from Your word? Would You attend this word with your blessing and help us all to understand more the necessary command that's in front of us? May Your praise be on our lips because it's in our hearts. Expand our vision of what it means to praise You, O God, in Jesus' matchless name. Amen. [End]

Psalm 150 is a song. It's a poem. It's an artistic composition. T. S. Eliot's a poet of lesser glory than David and his companions, but he wrote a poem called "Little Gidding," and in it, it says this little verse: "What we call the beginning is often the end, and to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from. Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning. Every poem, an epitaph."

Eliot's poetic words remind us that the end is really what needs to be in our minds. Why we do what we do, where we're trying to head, whether you're thinking about a business deal or raising your kids, you have a goal in mind, and you want to start in a place that's going to set you towards that culmination, that finish. Well, Psalm 150 is the perfect note of praise that brings the entirety of God's inspired songbook to a most appropriate close. It's the message of Psalm 150 that takes us in the direction that God intends to take us. The idea behind this Psalm is that there is a necessary response to the knowledge and revelation of God, and that is that we would praise the Lord.

But we come from a world, especially when you're near the buckle of the very belt of the Bible, a place like Dallas, Texas, where praise the Lord is just an exclamation, isn't it? "Well, praise the Lord, I didn't hit that deer. Praise the Lord, that's a seven-pound catfish. Praise the Lord!" And though God's praise should always be on our lips in ordinary and extraordinary things, I think our understanding of what it means to praise the Lord and how the Lord is to be praised and what is so praiseworthy needs to be

expanded and clarified, a vision of the end of praise given to our hearts so that our praise is more biblical, more God-centered, and more full. We could all benefit from that, right?

Well, that's why the title of Psalm 150. This sermon is "The Point of Praise." I'd like to try to help focus our vision on what it really means to praise the Lord, that a word like "hallelujah" that's always been in your vocabulary because it's always been in your Bible, a word that exists in near every language in the same form, "hallelujah," would be more full as a result of you coming to church today, that your understanding and depth of praise would be increased along with your experience of God's word in Psalm 150.

What I love about the message of Psalm 150 is that it applies to every single one of us. Even if you're here today and you're not a believer, I think that there's a message. If you're not a Christian, you're struggling through things and you showed up here for whatever reason, I think this psalm has something for you because praise is something you need to understand even in your life. And for every believer here, whether you've been a Christian for a short time or you've been following Jesus for a long time, we all need to expand our understanding of what it means to praise the Lord. And so that's why the message of Psalm 150 is both timeless and important, as well as, I would say, unmissable.

Listen to Robert Davidson from his book *The Vitality of the Psalter*. He says this: "Psalm 150 is an extended doxology which sets the seal on the entire collection." So in other words, it's the end of the Psalms intentionally. It's a doxology. And you know the Psalms are five books. They're arranged into five different arrangements, right? There are five books of the Psalter. Every single one of them ends with a doxological word of praise.

Well, this one closes out Book Five, but it also serves as a suitable exclamation point, a final word about God's inspired songbook. So, Davidson continues, "Psalm 150 begins and ends as the previous four

psalms do with, 'Praise the Lord!' And in between the opening and closing words, the word 'praise' occurs no less than ten times. It's as if this Psalm is saying to us, 'Whatever else you may forget about the Psalms, never forget that central to authentic faith is the praise of God.' Forget that, and you will undermine the foundations of everything else."

Friends, central to authentic faith is the praise of God. That's the message of Psalm 150. That's the message of, "Praise the Lord!" That's the point of praise. And to really understand it, I'd like to explore this psalm seemingly quite simple, right, just six verses long, has the same phrase in it 13 times saying, "Praise the Lord," in various ways. What's behind this though is I think the catapult that can send our praise to another level, a deepening and a furthering of our understanding and our experience and our practice of what it means to not just say the words, "Praise the Lord," but actually to do just that, to praise the God of the universe.

So let's enter into this psalm on its own terms. I think it's best that we ask five questions, to unpack five questions by looking at the contours of this psalm as if we're going to explore the anatomy of praise. We're going to take it apart and find out what praise is made of. And so our first question, is, "What is praise? What is praise?" And I think that's the obvious question based on the way this psalm is composed.

Verse 1 and verse 6 both close with those words, "Praise the Lord!" Verse 6, "Praise the Lord!" And as you heard in the Davidson quote, this is part of a collection at the end of the Psalms.

Flip your Bible back a page or two to Psalm 145. Psalm 145 is not part of this collection. It's a psalm that begins with the words, "I'll extol Thee, my God, O King, and I'll bless Thy name forever and ever." But once you get into Psalms 146 through 150, you'll see there's something about this final collection of the songbook that has an underlined note of praise.

Look with me at Psalm 146:1. What does it say? First words, go ahead. "Praise the Lord!" It's the Hebrew word "hallelujah," a word that's translated almost directly and brought over into every language. It's a universal way of saying from the Hebrew language, "Praise the Lord!" It's, "Hallelujah!" *Hallel* is the verb for "to praise," one of the Hebrew words that means "praise." *Jah* is a shortened form of the name Yahweh, a poetic form, like when we sing a hymn and there's a mark in the word "every" to try to shorten it to one syllable in a song, in a poem: e'vry. I don't know how to do it, but you know. That's what *Jah* is. So "hallelujah" is the opening word.

Look at verse 10 of Psalm 146: "The Lord will reign forever, Thy God, O Zion, to all generations." What does it say? "Praise the Lord!" Good, your participation points are high today.

Psalm 147:1, what does it say? "Praise the Lord! For it's good to sing praises to our God." What about verse 20, "He's not dealt thus with any nation; as for His ordinances, they have not known them. Praise the Lord!"

Psalm 148, it opens with what words? "Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the heights! Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all stars of light!" Skip to the end of Psalm 148, verse 14 says, "Praise for all His godly ones; even for the sons of Israel, a people near Him. Praise the Lord!"

Psalm 149:1, how's it open? "Praise the Lord!" Verse 9, "To execute judgment on them the judgment written; this is an honor for all His godly ones. Praise the Lord!"

And then our Psalm, Psalm 150, repeatedly reminding us, and framed with these words, "Praise the Lord! Hallelujah!" And we start to understand what is praise. And I think the first thing that you should jot down is that praise is a verb, it's a verb. There's only one verb in Psalm 150 and it's the verb *hallel*, and it's repeated thirteen times. Eleven of the times, it's put in what's

called the imperative tense. It's a command. It's not just an exclamation, it's a command, it's an imperative. The other two times, it's in the jussive form, which is also an imperatival kind of sense.

And so the people who are hearing the words of Psalm 150 are being not invited to praise, they're being commanded to praise. They're being summoned to praise God. Praising God is not a mere exclamation. Praising God is a command, a summons, an imperatival word from God. It's an action being called for. And so that's the beginning of kind of approaching this question, "What does it mean to praise the Lord?" Well, praise is necessary. Praise is essential. Praise is required.

But further, what does it mean to praise? That word "hallelujah," it seems like something a more enthusiastic group of Christians might say a lot. It's an expression that may or may not be used in your Christian language very much. We're all familiar with it. But why is it a command? What does it mean to praise the Lord? And I think there's two ways to answer that. There's a biblical kind of lexical way, and I'll do that one really quick.

So, there's three words in the Bible for "praise." The first is *yadah*, and first in the Old Testament, *yadah*, and it is "to praise," "to give thanks," or "to confess" – a very common word in the Psalms. A second word often translated "praise" in the Old Testament is *zamar*, and that means "to sing praises," and it's obviously used commonly in the Psalms. The third word, though, is the word that Psalm 150 chooses to employ: *hallel*, the root word of "hallelujah," meaning "to praise, to honor, or commend."

All three of these terms can overlap. They all mean "to praise." But this word, the object of our consideration in Psalm 150, is a word that at the root of it means "to flash," "to radiate," and "to shine." To praise is to radiate. To praise is to shine. To praise is to flash. To praise is to give thanks. It is to speak out of the glories of. That's what the word "praise" means. That's just a kind of a biblical Old Testament lesson on the word "praise."

But what does the concept mean? For that I'd like to employ an old friend. His name is Clive Staples Lewis. I met him in Narnia when I was a kid. He wasn't always a Christian, Mr. Lewis. Instead, he was – well, his vocation was he was a professor, an Oxford don, a smart guy. He taught ancient mythology and literature. He was an expert in things like Beowulf, and that's what he did at Oxford. And he read the Bible, but he read the Bible as literature. And when he read the Psalms, he would later in his book *Reflections on the Psalms* talk about how he used to feel when he was cynical, when he was critical, before he was a Christian, when he would read the Psalms.

He said God seemed to him like a vain woman who wants compliments. All of this commands of praise struck him as something needy in God. And it wasn't until the Lord would soften Lewis' heart and begin to draw him to himself. And once Lewis was converted to Christianity, his understanding of what it meant to praise God and his initial wrong conceptions about why God demanded praise started to fill out his own praise of God.

This is what Lewis said: "The most obvious fact about praise, whether of God or anything, strangely escaped me. I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honor. I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise. The world rings with praise – lovers praising their mistresses, readers their favorite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favorite game; praise of weather, wines, dishes, actors, horses, colleges, countries, historical personages, children, flowers, mountains, rare stamps, rare beetles, even sometimes politicians."

He goes on, "My whole more general difficulty about the praise of God depended on my absurdly denying to us, as regards the supremely valuable, what we delight to do, what indeed we can't help doing about everything else we value. I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses, but completes the enjoyment. It is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are, the delight is incomplete until it is expressed."

Do you follow all that? That fills in the underlying philosophy of, "What is praise?" Well, praise is completely ordinary. "How about them Dodgers"? is what I would say. But here, I guess you say, "How about those World Champion Rangers?" World Champion Rangers. Love Corey Seager, he's a ball player; I celebrate with you. And I know none of you, none of you, not even the worst, most deplorable sinner in this room would say, "How about them Astros?" Excuse me, I got very sick, just - oh, excuse me. Very, very ill. You wouldn't say that. These are God-fearing people.

But we do that about a baseball team, right? We praise what we enjoy. We do that about our favorite pizza place. "Is this barbecue spot a 3.9 or a 4.1?" We praise all kinds of things. How much more so ought our affections, our gratitude, our expression of pleasure and joy and appreciation be towards the One who is greater than all those things, who made all those things and who made us for Himself.

This is, "What is praise?" It's something. It's expression of enjoyment. It's delight. It's the consummation of our joy in God, and I believe it's God's goal in being God. That's what Lewis picked up on, because God is the greatest, the best, the perfect being. It is only appropriate that He commands, and in His mercy, invites us to praise. That's what praise is.

Let me do one further experiment. We'll spend a little bit more time on this question because I think it's most important and most misunderstood. Pretend with me that you only have for your Bible the book of Psalms, okay? That's it. No Genesis, no Kings, no Proverbs, no Gospels, no Revelation. Don't worry, I'll give your Bible back in a minute. But right now, you only have the book of Psalms.

Think about it. Let's say you read it, you studied it, you memorized it, you did a vacation Bible school about it, you preached it on Sundays. What would you think would be the point of human existence? It's to praise the Lord, right? I mean, that would be the point. If all you had was the Psalms, you would say, "The point of human existence is to praise the Lord, without



question, without doubt." That's what's going on in times of sorrow and lament and trial, in times of fear, in times of joy and celebration, looking back on redemptive history because of who He is. You would say, "The point of human existence is to praise the Lord," if the Psalms was your only Bible. Okay, you can have your Bible back now, whole thing, cover to cover, Genesis to Revelation. No Apocrypha, sorry.

Got your Bible back. Okay, now study the whole thing, do VBS about it, preach it on Sundays, read it in your quiet time. What would you say is the purpose of human existence? What are we here for? You get the whole Bible. I think your answer would be exactly the same. It would be that the purpose of human existence is to praise God, that our lives in this world are centered around God, that that is not a freak thing that the Psalms have figured out. Instead, the entire Bible is testifying to the reality that affection expressed and centered on God and His work and His ways and His word is the point of human existence. It's why we're here, it's what we were made for.

And you find it everywhere in the Bible, don't you? Every doxology centers around the glory of God in praise. Every command that we're faced is rooted in an indicative reality of what God has done in the gospel to restore humanity and its fallenness so that we might praise His glorious name. We would find text after text, like 1 Corinthians 10:31, saying that "whatever we eat or drink or whatever we do, we do it all for the glory of God." And that's the message of Psalms. That's the message of praise.

And if you were to study beyond the Bible to the history of how the Bible has been studied and understood in historical theology, you would find the Westminster Divines in the 17th century writing in the shorter catechism, "What is the chief end of man?" And their answer would resound with the same exact message, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, and the fulfillment of that joy is praise."

And so on and on, the message of the Bible, Old and New Testament, reminds us that God is pleased with praise, more so than the entirety of the

sacrificial system. Psalm 69:30, "I will praise God's name in song and glorify Him with thanksgiving." This will please the Lord more than an ox, more than a bull with its horns and hoofs. You'd read Psalm 22:3 that says that "the holy God of Israel is enthroned." The Hebrew word means "to sit" or "to inhabit on the praises of Israel."

God chooses as His meeting point and the symbol of His reign over this world that He made the praises of His people. Praise is pointed towards the kingship of God. He inhabits our praise. It means that that's the meeting point. That's a foretaste of Emmanuel, God with us. He chooses to meet with His people in praise because praise best expresses who God is and who we are.

It's true in our private devotion to God. Psalm 103, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, all that is within me, bless His name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." That's private, meditative praise.

Well, what about in public expressions? Well, Psalm 150 is an example. Another would be Psalm 149. It says in verse 6, it's just right before us, "Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand to execute vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute on them the judgment written; this is in honor of all His godly ones. Praise the Lord!" That's kind of militant, don't you think, sort of aggressive.

Praise is equated with a weapon. Praise is weaponized in Psalm 149 because praise is eventually what will vindicate all you worshipers in the end. As the whole world shakes their fist at God and refuses to bow to Him, there you have Christians often persecuted and scattered who just continue to praise the Lord. And when this entire world is brought to its consummation, what will continue on? Not wars and rebels and sin and sorrow and suffering. What will continue on is praise. Praise will be weaponized because it'll be vindicating all those who were involved in it.

Praise will be weaponized. That's not just an Old Testament thing, that's what Philippians says, right? "Every knee will bow, every tongue will confess, either by terror or by love." You will bow before King Jesus. The question is, "Is will that be an act of praise or a final judgment and condemnation?"

You see, praise is what we do because praise is what we're made for. God is worthy of our praise, and we've been built to praise Him. Praise is the point. What is praise? It is the affection and expression of gratitude and love and enjoyment that finds its fulfillment when it's spoken out or sung or prayed or shared or testified of. That's what praise is, and that's why this psalm says simply, "Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!" First note, final note, because that's what life is about. Life is about praise. So that's what praise is.

Question Number Two - and we'll be done by 4:00 or 5:00 this afternoon. Question Number Two: "Where is He to be praised? Where is He to be praised?" And this isn't just a simple question about location, there's more here than meets the eye.

Look at the second half of verse 1 of Psalm 150. It says, "Praise God in His sanctuary." Well, that seems like an easy thing, right? What's God's sanctuary? Well, the Hebrew word actually can be translated "His holiness," which could mean His nature, that He's a holy God, a thrice holy God; or it could be sanctuary. And that doesn't solve it either because the sanctuary at times in the Bible is the tabernacle, the kind of mobile home of God's praise; and other times it's the temple, the one that Solomon built, and then it got torn down, replaced by another one. And then when the temple's gone, the praises are inhabited on God's people, the new covenant. We're the place where God is praised in our hearts, in our congregations.

So, what kind of sanctuary is being talked about there? That doesn't solve it either because the sanctuary can also be a reference to the throne of God in heaven, where He's praised by angels. And so rather than answering our question by locking down an exact coordinate of praise - as so many of the

competing false deities in the Old Testament were about: god's of the hills, god of fertility, god of this region - our God is everywhere. And so His praise is in His sanctuary, wherever He chooses to be praised, which is everywhere.

And that poetic line is further balanced by the next one, "Praise Him in His mighty expanse, or maybe your Bible in the note there says "firmament." Well, you know the word "firmament" from what book of the Bible? Genesis. You guys went, "Genesis." You worked through that whole thing. You know Genesis, this is Genesis group. Firmament is that super important concept in creation where God spoke the firmament into existence.

And "firmament" in Genesis 2, it's that sky, it's those stars, it's the planets, it's the atmosphere, it's everything above us. It's the direction of our praise. And so what's happening in this locative kind of moment is our praise is not being restricted to a particular place, but it's being amplified to the place where God is, where He chooses to be in the realm of His creation. So, the answer to our question, "Where is He to be praised?" Well, the answer is, "This transcendent God is to be praised everywhere."

Listen to Derek Kidner. He says it like this: "So the call is to God's worshipers on earth, meeting at His chosen place, but also to His heavenly hosts. The firmament is the sky, the vault of heaven, to mingle their praises with ours. Earth and heaven can be utterly at one in this. His glory fills the universe, His praise must do no less." Wow.

So, God is to be praised everywhere as heaven and earth meet, the songs of angels and the songs of men throughout all of human history meet and mingle in a praise that is worthy of the omnipresent God who cannot be contained to one hill or one city or one people, but his praise is expansive like the sky. His praise is holy like the sanctuary, but it cannot be restricted to a tiny place or a particular period of history because He is God always and forever, and He is always and everywhere to be praised. That's the answer to our second question. "Where is He to be praised?" Answer, "Everywhere."

Question Number Three: "Why is He to be praised?" And this is an important question that the Psalms often give very specific answers to. Psalm 90 is the song of Moses. It's a prayer of gratitude for God's specific work in the exodus. It tells us the reason we should sing that song is because God killed a bunch of Egyptians on their chariots and crashed the sea on them, right? That's a very explicit and specific reason to praise God. And the Psalms do that all the time. Sometimes it's focused, clearly focused on one attribute. Psalm 136, "His *chesed*," over and over again. His loyal love, His loyal love, His covenant faithfulness – that's the reason for praise.

So, what's this culminating song? How does it answer the question, "Why should we praise Him?" Look at verse 2: "Praise Him for His mighty deeds. Praise Him according to His excellent greatness."

Well, that's kind of broad, don't you think? His mighty deeds, well, that includes everything God has done in all of redemptive history. That would include creation. That would include redemption. That would include deliverance. That would include salvation. That would include His acts of judgment, His displays of grace, His faithfulness to His word – all that God has ever done in His people, in the nations, all that God has done. That is praising Him for His mighty deeds.

The preposition is featured in two ways. It's a prepositional, not phrase, but just little expression: "Praise Him for His mighty deeds." That would be creation, deliverance, redemption, grace, kingship, judgment, forgiveness, all kinds of Psalms. If it sounds broad to you, just flip back and you have 149 different occasions of praise.

But to summarize, Psalm 150 says we praise Him, basically, for what He's done. I don't think you have to be exclusive to the things He's done in the Bible. I think you could very easily say, "I can thank God for the things that He's done in my life, in my testimony." I mean, think about the family to which you were born into, gave you that grandmother who shared the

gospel with you, or that faithful example, or that good friend in college who cared enough to tell you that if you don't repent, you would surely perish. You can thank God for all His mighty deeds, His acts of providence, not just in church history, but in your history. And so he gives us this big, broad statement: "We praise God for what He has done."

But that's not the only reason. Verse 2, "We praise Him" - my translation - "in accordance with His immense greatness." This tells us not just thanking God and praising God for what He's done, but we praise God for who He is. And this is all over the Psalms as well: His attributes of holiness, justice, and grace. But here, it's broadly stated, "in accordance with His immense greatness." His immense greatness is supposed to be praised in accordance with its immensity. There's a correspondence in this little phrase. What does that mean? That means - oh, I need you to do this for me" I took your Bible away; I gave it back; you can trust me.

How immense is God's greatness? Show me with your hands. Yea big, yea immense greatness? What do you think, kids? How immense is God's greatness? Yes, I like the way you're thinking. All the way. Stretch it out, brother.

But is that enough? It's not, because if His greatness was this immense, we could praise Him in accordance with His immense greatness this amount. But since His immense greatness - all the manifold perfections of the perfect triune God go on forever and ever - then our praise needs to be in accordance with His immense greatness. The only praise that could ever measure up is a praise that will never measure up. We will always seek to fill the cup of God's worthiness with the meager expressions of our praise; and it will get louder, and it will get wider as the gospel goes across the nations.

But as this world chapter draws to a close, there will be a time when there will be no sin and no sorrow and no death and no opposition to God's praise. But all creatures will praise God without exception - every tongue, every tribe, every nation. All of those, whether by terror or by love, will

praise the perfect name of God. And how long will they praise Him? For all eternity. And will it ever end? No, because it's eternity, and it shouldn't end because God's manifold perfections never end. His immense greatness is to be praised in accordance with the praises offered; and therefore, eternity is a necessity to focus on God's glory. That's why He's to be praised because of what He's done and because of who He is.

You go deep, you go Dutch. Herman Bavinck says it this way: "Dogmatics," which is a way of talking about a category of systematic theology. I'm going to take the word "dogmatics," put it in that plant and put the word "theology" here because it's easier.

"Theology shows us God, who is all sufficient in Himself, nevertheless glorifies Himself in His creation, which even when it is torn apart by sin is gathered up again in Christ. It describes for us," - theology does - "it describes for us God, always God, from beginning to end - God in His being, God in His creation, God against sin, God in Christ, God breaking down all resistance through the Holy Spirit and guiding the whole of creation back to the objective He decreed for it: the glory of His name. Theology, therefore, is not a dull and arid science, it is a theodicy," - an appearing of God - "a doxology" - a praise to God - "to all God's virtues and perfections, a hymn of adoration and thanksgiving, a 'glory to God in the highest.'"

Why do we praise God? Well, we have plenty of theological reason. It's because of what He's done, and God does what He does because of who He is. And so that's why we praise Him. There's always sufficient evidence and motivation to fuel the praise of the worshiper.

Question Four: "How is He to be praised?" verses 3-5: "Praise Him with trumpet sound," or blast of the horn. The word there is "shofar", that ram's horn that priests would blow. "Praise Him with the harp and the lyre." Two stringed instruments, right? Verse 4, "Praise Him with the tambourine and dancing; praise Him with strings and pipe. Praise Him with loud cymbals; praise Him with noisy cymbals."

There's a lot going on there. I could give you 157 pages of biblical archeological stuff - I scanned it - about ancient instruments. We don't know exactly what they were. We have all kinds of other cultures. Drew a lot of pictures of instruments. That would have been the contemporary instruments of the Israelites. But it was basically wind instruments like a trumpet, something you blow into to make sound. Stringed instruments like a harp, lyre, strings that you strum and tune, the ancient equivalent of a guitar or a harp. There was percussion instruments. That's the timbrel, that's the that's the cymbals, that's the resounding symbols. And we don't know what's going on in verse 5. There's loud symbols and, apparently, louder symbols. So we know those two different kinds of symbols, like little castanets, or if it's just "cush" or "cushhhh," you know, different ways of playing them. But there's all these instruments on display.

And so the answer to, "How is He to be praised?" is a cacophony of musical instruments: rejoicing, dancing, and ensuing celebration. Maybe it's helpful to note that seven instruments are listed here; and that's not supposed to be inclusive, like you can only worship God with these seven instruments. But the number seven, especially in poetic literature, is supposed to be speaking of totality or expansion or fullness. So seven instruments are a perfect kind of a number. All kinds of instruments is the idea. The whole orchestra is to be employed - the wind, the string, the percussion.

But there's more here if you look a little deeper. The blast of the horn is the shofar, later would be a trumpet, an instrument made of brass, right? But that particular instrument was employed by the priests mostly in the in the biblical revelation. They would call to worship with a blast of the horn, or they would summon to begin the battle with the blast of a horn. Wasn't so much a musical instrument to play along with as it was one that grabbed your attention.

The harp and the lyre are most commonly associated with the Levites, the worship leaders of Israel, the the priestly class. But the tambourine, the dancing, that's something in Exodus 15 that spoke of the people, like in the streets celebrating on a festival day. The dancing isn't the sensual kind of



rhythmic dancing we think of today, something that could be done in a sinful way; this is a celebratory kind of dancing, like a wedding kind of dance. Think of Ancient Near Eastern people in circles, "Da-da-da-da." That sounded Russian, but you know what I mean. Dancing, you know, what'd you expect?

So, what's that? That's the people. That's the ordinary people. They're involved in the praise. More so, the strings and the pipe. The pipe is just a little whistle. Like, a child would have that instrument. And then these loud cymbals closing it all out. The idea is that this praise is inside and outside instruments, stuff suitable for the temple and stuff not suitable for the temple. It's a panoply, a whole orchestra of sounds and celebration.

This is an important point to make that justifies, I think, sufficiently the use of instruments in our worship, because there's different sects of Christians who think, "Well, you're not allowed to have instruments," and their argument is – they have different, philosophical arguments. But their argument is mainly, "Well, the New Testament doesn't specifically list instruments." And my answer would be, "Brother, there is a lot the New Testament doesn't specifically list for our worship," like y'all's chairs, this weird thing, this guy, "Not listed? You're out." No, that's not how we regulate worship. I'll fix that later, Miss Amy, I'm sorry about that. And so I don't think that's a good argument, I think that's like a radical dispensational argument that's coming from covenantalists, it's ironic.

Anyway, Psalm 150 is enough for me to say, "How is He to be praised?" The answer, "By all means." You got a banjo? Well, okay, bring it. You got a harmonica? Let's go. And I'm not saying, like, "Bring it next week. Let's all, you know. You talk to Matt about that. he's very tall and intimidating."

So, I'm saying that there's nothing that's not suitable when rightly employed, appropriately employed for the purpose of praising the Lord. The idea here is the whole orchestra is involved inside and outside, the professional worship leaders and the people. Everyone is singing.

And let me tell you something about instruments. Watch. Go ahead. Where's the guitar? It's gone already. "Go ahead, guitar." Nothing, right, because they don't play themselves. It takes the breath of people. And the most incredible instrument of all that no one's going to deny the employment of in worship is the human voice, right, the range, the portability. I mean, there's a lot going on there. And so all of it is perfectly suitable and appropriate for praising the Lord, all of it. I'm fixing this now. I think it's a distraction to worship. Okay. There's rocks, we'll deal with them later.

The answer to our question, "How is He to be worshiped?" The answer is, "By all means." And they can't play themselves, so bring your instruments and play them to the glory of God. This isn't a performance, this isn't a concert, this is a panoply of praise. And God inhabits the praise of His people. "Make joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth." That's what's happening.

Fifth question, final: "Who is to praise the Lord? Who is to praise the Lord?" The answer is in verse 6: "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord." And then that final word, "Hallelujah!"

So, who is to praise the Lord? The way to translate that is not, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord." That's an over-translation. It simply says, "Every breath is to praise Yahweh. Every breath is to praise Yahweh." And there's something going on here beyond what you first see because what's happening is there is no instrument that can be adequate. There's no instrument that can be fully accomplish this praise. Instead, it is requiring the entirety of God's creation, not just the people of Israel. This is everyone under the firmament mentioned in verse 1 is called and commanded to praise the Lord. If you have breath, it is your obligation as a creature to employ it to God's praise.

In Genesis 2:7, "breath" is that aspiration, is considered a gift from God. God, in other words, gives breath to mankind, and when He gives breath to mankind, He gives mankind life. When the flood comes, everything that has breath is what's being put under judgment. And so breath equals life. And if

you are breathing, friend, this morning, then you are the recipient of God's grace.

In Job 34, "breath" has to do with spiritual understanding. In Proverbs 20, "breath" is equated with a knowledge of right and wrong. "Breath" is something that we have as creatures made in the likeness and image of God, and that means that our breath is, in and of itself, evidence that we have been the recipients of God's mercy, and therefore ought to praise Him. The fact that all breath is called to praise the Lord reminds us that it's not just the people of Israel, but all creatures. All that are alive are to join their praises with the sounds of their instruments, with everything available to them at their resources; and everybody has breath, and therefore everybody needs to praise the Lord.

And so the answer of, "Who is to praise the Lord?" is everything that breathes, needs to, must, has to praise the Lord. And in that final word, "Praise the Lord! Hallelujah!" we have the final word of the Psalms, and we have the central message of the Bible, and we have a glimpse and a foretaste of a future we can only imagine, a world to come that will be a world of perfect praise.

Ephesians 1:12, it says that "we've been chosen and redeemed for the praise of His glorious grace." We exist to praise. And so the final word of this song and the first word of this song and the center message of the Bible is simply this: "Praise the Lord!" Praise God everywhere, for everything, with everything. Everyone, praise the Lord.

[Prayer] Father, thank You for this call to praise, a command that to eternal peril could be ignored. So, Father, I pray for anyone here that doesn't know You savingly, that has not yet given their life to Jesus Christ and found at His cross the forgiveness that You've offered through faith, not through any work of our own, just by trusting and believing, by turning from our sin and finding that forgiveness, God, if there's anyone here who has yet to praise You, would You open their eyes and use their breath as it was intended to

give You all glory, adoration, thanksgiving, honor, and praise? Do that work by Your Holy Spirit and by Your mercy.

And Father, for these brothers and sisters who walk with You, I pray that You would increase the altitude and experience of their praise, enrich it theologically. And, God, while You're at it, would You crank up the volume on our praise? Help us to know that we ought to respond to You in praise.

Father, You're worthy, that's for sure. It's because of Jesus that we come to You. It's because of His work that we can praise. And we give You all the glory and honor in Jesus' name. Amen.