



WBC Verse for the Year 2020

'The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness'
(Lamentations 3 verses 22-23)

Psalm 148

A summary, with some things to reflect on.

A video of this is on Youtube <https://youtu.be/GHykjAtwOp4> or our website - wychwoodbaptist.org.uk/resources/midweek-reflections/

We conclude our reflections in the Psalms with this wonderful Psalm of praise. On Sunday we looked at Psalm 145 - the last of King David's psalms, and the first of this final selection of psalms, which focus on praise.

Psalm 148 speaks of the Universal Praise that our Creator God is due from His creation. From the highest heavens to all the earth.

READ: PSALM 148 verses 1-6

From the highest heights

Our Psalm opens with a familiar call to praise. Over verses 1-6 its addressed to the highest heights. From the heavens to the rest of the created universe.

It starts with supernatural heavenly beings. *'All his angels ... his heavenly hosts'* (v 2). Those heavenly beings who dwell in the heavens with God. They may dwell with God, but their place is beneath him - He is worthy of their praise!

The following verses then gradually move us from the highest heaven to God's created Universe that sits above the Earth.

'Sun and moon ... all you shining stars' (v 3) ... *'Highest heavens and ... waters above the skies'* (v 4, see Genesis 1v7). All above the earth, including the contained waters which we see more of in verse 8.

All that is above us - from the highest heights are to Praise God.

'Let them praise the name of the LORD' (verse 5) - because He is their creator. He (verse 6) has put them in place. Ensures that they endure.

All of creation points to its creator. All of creation is to respond in praise to their creator God.

How do they do that? What does that mean? Christopher Ash (Psalms for You), reflecting on their created order, explains how it is -

'by exhibiting in their regularities and functions the order that God has placed in creation. The sun praises God by shining ... The moon praises God by orbiting the earth in a regular manner ... just by being what they are meant to be, created things speak, as it were in praise of God.'

This is true of the whole of creation - and as we will see, helps to explain the final verse of this psalm.

READ: PSALM 148 verses 7-14

To all the earth

As we move into verse 7, the focus is on the earth. Starting with the ocean depths, and the *'great sea creatures'* contained therein. Yet this is more than just the sea and its creatures. Attention turns (v 8) to the elements - but notice what in particular. It's lightening, hail, snow, clouds, stormy winds. These can be hostile and threatening elements. Add these to the sea and its' creatures - the sea often being a picture of chaos and hostility - and we are reminded that even the most powerful and potentially threatening of creation is under God's control, and is due to give Him praise.

The verses that follow consider the greatest and the least. From mountains to hills, fruit trees to cedars (v 9). Both wild animals and cattle. From small creatures to the birds of the sky (v 10).

Then to mankind (vv 11-12). Created in his image, and given responsibility over the whole earth (Genesis 1 vv26-28). Yet, nonetheless created, and along with all of God's creation - to give Him praise and glory. So, whether Kings, Princes, rulers, male, female, young or old, we all sit under our creator God. He is worthy of our praise. *'Let them [the whole of creation] praise the name of the LORD. For his name alone is exalted; his splendour is above the earth and the heavens'* (verse 13).

All of creation is to bring praise to its creator, God - including man, made in God's image. Yet, we know how we've failed to do that. Romans 1 (vv 18-25) reminds us how by nature we have turned against God, exchanging his glory for idols. We have *'exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator'* (Romans 1 v 25). We fail to exalt God alone, and give him all the glory God and praise.

Yet, in conclusion of our Psalm, verse 14 reminds us how this is possible - and reveals how this is not simply a Psalm about God's creation, but also of God's redemption. To talk of God raising a horn (v 14) is imagery of strength and power. It points to God's anointed one, his Messiah. It points to God's provision of his one and only Son, the LORD Jesus - for the praise of his people.

Our faith in Jesus' death and resurrection is what makes us God's people, it's what makes us *'close to his heart'* (v 14). It's because of Jesus and the redemption that we have through him that we can give praise to God, and exalt him alone. It's what brings us back into praise and worship of him, rather than worshipping and serving the created (Romans 1 v 25).

This psalm not only calls the whole Universe to praise God - it reminds us how God has made this possible for us - because of the redemption that we have through His son, Jesus.

This reminds us too of the current tension of the days that we are living in. Whilst redeemed, we still fail in our praise and adoration of God. Yet we look forward to that day when we do so in his presence forever, as with all of God's creation we bring praise to God, singing:

'To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honour and glory and power, for ever and ever!' (Revelation 5 v 13)

REFLECTION

Spend some time re-reading the passage, and thinking about the following

*The Created Universe is subject to its Creator
& is to give Him Praise*

These verses call for the whole of creation to praise God, and remind us that there is nothing outside of his control. All is subject to Him.

'He commanded and they were created' (v 5).

*'Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted'* (v 13).

What does it mean to you that nothing is beyond God's control.
That all was created by Him and is subject to Him?

*We have been redeemed by Jesus, and because of this we
can and should praise and exalt God alone.*

Spend some time rejoicing in the redemption that you have through
Jesus and how this makes you one of
'the people close to [God's] heart' (v 14).

*Consider the praise and honour which God is due - that
'his name alone is [to be] exalted'* (v 13)

Is that true in your life?

What else strikes you about this passage?