



Sermon: Sunday, May 25, 2025

“Praise the Lord!”

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 148:1-14 ¹ Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights! ² Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host! ³ Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars! ⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the heavens! ⁵ Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created. ⁶ He established them forever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed. ⁷ Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, ⁸ fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command! ⁹ Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! ¹⁰ Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds! ¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth! ¹² Young men and women alike, old and young together! ¹³ Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven. ¹⁴ He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the Lord!

Introduction: Life Is Hard, Yet We’re Told to ‘Praise the Lord’

Today is the sixth Sunday of Easter, and our Scripture reading, Psalm 148, begins and ends with the same phrase: **“Praise the Lord.”** That phrase in Hebrew is *Hallelujah* (הללויה), which comes from two words—*Hallelu*, meaning **“praise,”** and *Yah*, a short form of God’s name, **Yahweh** (יהוה).

The book of Psalms is full of different kinds of poetry, but the last few chapters—Psalms 146 to 150—are especially focused on praise. This shows us something important: praising God is at the heart of our faith.

But let’s be honest—it’s not always easy to praise God, especially when life is hard. Many people are going through tough times. Some are dealing with physical illness. Others are carrying deep emotional wounds. Many are caught in war or suffering from hunger. Some feel completely cut off from other people. Life can be full of pain, yet the psalmist in today’s passage still says, “Praise the Lord.” Why does he say that? What could he be thinking? And can we really agree with him?

Body: What Does It Mean to Praise the Lord?

In today’s Psalm, praising God means giving Him our full attention and devotion. Let me give you a picture to help explain it. Imagine someone climbing Mount Everest. Climbing that kind of mountain is life-threatening. The climber must use all their energy and focus to reach the top. They’re not thinking about anything else. They trust the mountain to accept them, and they’re putting their life in its hands. By the time they reach the summit, they realize just how small they are compared to the greatness around them.

This kind of experience is like the spiritual journey the psalmist has gone through. When he shouts, **“Praise the Lord!”** it’s because, to him, God is the only one who really matters. Things like human pride, success, pleasure, or ambition no longer hold power over him. That means even his personal struggles and the injustices he faces don’t shake him anymore. He doesn’t worry about what he’ll eat, drink, or wear. He’s found total freedom and joy. That’s why he can say, **“Praise the Lord!”**

But here’s the thing: many people today look for meaning by praising themselves instead of praising God. They focus on self-promotion, self-love, self-pity, and self-centeredness. But instead of filling us up, this leaves us empty. In Christianity, we call that sin—anything that turns us away from God and toward ourselves. And sin ends up ruining our lives. That’s why today’s Psalm keeps calling us to praise the Lord, not ourselves.



The psalmist doesn't stop with just himself—he invites all of creation to praise God. Angels, the heavenly armies, the sun and moon, the stars, powerful forces on earth, kings and all nations, leaders, young people and old, men and women, kids—everyone and everything is called to give praise. But why? Verse 13 tells us: **“Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.”**

This verse reminds us that God is the only true ruler. Earthly leaders and powers aren't in charge—God is. He is the Creator and Master of all life, including ours.

Lately, we've seen a lot of dry weather and drought. Farmers who needed to plant corn were worried. But then, thank God, it rained, and the drought let up. Political powers couldn't fix that—but God, who made the sky and the land, could. Sometimes these things seem ordinary, but when we pay attention, we see how amazing they really are.

Those everyday moments become extraordinary when we meet Jesus Christ. When His words speak to us and we start to understand who He is, everything changes. For instance, think about John 1:14: **“The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”**

When our lives are filled with the grace and truth of Jesus, no force in the world can take away the peace and freedom we've been given. When we begin to grasp the depth of the Bible, everything else in life feels small in comparison.

But here's the sad part—not everyone understands what it means when we say, **“Only the name of the Lord is to be lifted high.”** People today are constantly trying to outdo each other and fight for control. That's why only a few people truly praise the Lord. This idea is highlighted in the final verse of today's Psalm—verse 14: **“He has raised up a horn for His people, praise for all His faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to Him. Praise the Lord!”**

Conclusion: God Gives Strength and Glory to His People

When the psalmist says that God “raised up a horn for His people,” he means God gave them strength and honor—not the kind of power the world values, but God's kind of strength and glory. Because of this, God's people don't chase after worldly power, and they don't fight evil with eviler.

Instead, they live with joy in the simple, daily life God has given them. That doesn't mean they live in luxury or have everything they want. It means they live with deep joy just because they belong to God. They are free and at peace in Christ—even when no one sees them or applauds them. They can hold onto hope through the Holy Spirit—even when facing death or suffering.

Now, maybe some people hear that and wonder, **“Is a life like that even possible?”** I don't want to judge those who doubt or live differently. But I do pray that everyone who calls themselves a Christian will at least try to live like the psalmist in today's passage—praising the Lord and enjoying the freedom and peace only He can give. **Amen!**

