

Hallelujah

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 18 September 2022

Preacher: Pastor Cal Morrison

[0 : 0 0] Psalm 150 Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary. Praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his mighty deeds. Praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with trumpet sound. Praise him with lute and harp. Praise him with tambourine and dance. Praise him with strings and pipe. Praise him with sounding cymbals. Praise him with loud clashing cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord. Amen. God, we thank you for your word to us. We know that it is living word. We thank you that you have spoken truth to us. We thank you that we have an opportunity to gather together to praise your name.

Speak to us now. Encourage us. Lift us. And may we glorify you together here. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, have you ever heard a song in a different language and thought, oh, that song sounds nice?

A number of years ago, I went on a family holiday to France and I really wanted to immerse myself in the culture. And so while I was away, I listened mostly to French music.

And I got a number of French Christian songs downloaded, you know, just to be safe. But I remember when we were out and about one day hearing a song on the radio, a French song on a French radio station.

[2 : 0 0] And I heard it and I thought, oh, I like that tune. Oh, that's nice. I think I'll download that and listen to it some more. And then I searched the lyrics. I searched the translation of those lyrics.

And I thought, oh, that's really not a nice song. I better not listen to that song. Ignorance is bliss. If only I'd paid more attention in my French classes in school.

I might not have been so unaware of the lyrics of that song. But, you know, I can tell you, I'm not completely ignorant. I can tell you a few French words. In fact, something that's backfired on me a number of times when I travel to different countries is I tend to learn a few words and phrases.

Mostly greetings and niceties. And when I'm talking to, introducing to people or whatever, I'll try and, you know, as a kind of we're in your country type thing.

I'll try and greet in that language and say some niceties and then inadvertently give the impression I know more than I actually do. And then people will say something in that language like, ah, you speak in so and so.

[3 : 1 1] And then continue to say many things that I cannot respond to. And then they give me a look as if to say, I thought you spoke this language. I'm sorry. Now, I don't know who among you speaks in whatever language or if it's any more than one language.

But since Psalm 150 was originally penned in Hebrew, I thought I would ask, by way of hands, showing hands, do any of you know Hebrew?

You know, or at least one word. Spoiler alert there.

Okay, so most of you would self-proclaim to say that you don't know Hebrew is the point. And here's the thing. If you were to hear this psalm sung or read in Hebrew, which at one point in my preparation I thought that I might attempt and then I thought, no way.

But if you were to hear this psalm sung or read in Hebrew, there would be at least one word that you would already know. A Hebrew word that many people have said, perhaps without realising it.

[4 : 29] Now, David. Sorry? Sorry, can I get a hallelujah? Oh, boy.

What are we going to do with this psalm? We need a rapturous praise. I don't know if any of you remember Rio, who spent some time with us in Calderwood.

Him and his wife Rio and Teresa came along. Rio visited here. I don't know if you remember Rio. He is not from this country. But he came here and he preached one time.

Anyway, I loved the way that he prayed. Aside from the fact that English is his third language. So whenever he was preaching or praying here, it was his third language.

But he has this real sincerity when he prays, you know. Like he's really conscious that he knows that he's talking to God. You know, I hear, I wasn't very good at English in school.

[5 : 29] English wasn't a strong subject. Creative subjects like music and art, English and math weren't good. So I wasn't good at the whole reading, writing, speaking business. You know, but I hear a lot of people later in life, when they're reciting something, it just sounds like English class.

You know, there's no heart or soul. Or, you know, get someone from drama to read the Bible, and they'll put the tone in it, you know. But I wasn't very good at English. But Rio, you know, whenever he's praying or speaking, he has a real sincerity.

When he's praying, it's like he knows he's speaking to the Creator God. But more than that, the thing that I always noticed, whenever Rio prayed, I don't know if you know Rio. Some of you might.

But whenever he prayed, whenever he finished praying, instead of just saying amen, Rio would always say hallelujah, amen. Always.

It was a curious thing, because nobody else does that. And that word hallelujah, the opening word of this psalm is Hebrew. So you see, this psalm in Hebrew doesn't say praise the Lord. It says hallelujah.

[6 : 31] That's the first word in this psalm. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. It may be translated as praise the Lord, yet not simply as Lord, as in a title, but the name of God, Yahweh.

Praise Yah is what it's saying. It's translation says praise the Lord. But really what it says is praise Yah. It joins the Hebrew word for praise with the first part of the divine name.

And so while in some translations, it may say praise the Lord, it's actually one of the few, in the entire world, one of the few Hebrew words that isn't translated, but is universally transliterated.

You see, when you translate a word, you use words from the new language to convey the meaning of the word from the other language. But transliteration is different. It uses letters to help you pronounce the original word.

But it's just left with the original word. Hallelujah. It's a word that is transliterated in nearly every language in the human, every human language on this planet.

[7 : 39] And this Hebrew expression of praise to Yahweh can be heard just like it was said in Hebrew thousands of years ago all over the planet today. Isn't that a wonderful thing? And you may be thinking, oh yeah, that's interesting.

You may be thinking, who cares? So what? But isn't it quite something that the Hebrew expression of praise, not just to anyone or to any God, but the Hebrew expression of praise to the God of Israel can to this very day be heard in practically every single human language across the planet.

Go anywhere and people know the word hallelujah. They've got it in every language. Isn't that incredible? Isn't that the most appropriate thing? You see, what does it say in verse 6 of this psalm?

Let everything that has breath. Hallelujah. We find that even to this day there is a witness of hallelujah in practically every language in every country of this planet.

And to that I would say, hallelujah. Now, we know that not every time that it's said that it's said with sincerity. Like my common ignorance of other languages, it's often said with a complete unawareness of what it means or conveys.

[8 : 57] Not everyone who says hallelujah is intentionally trying to say praise ya. But even when someone does say it with sincerity, is that all that the psalm is trying to say?

Now, have you ever heard the expression when someone says that someone's singing their praises? Oh, someone was singing your praises. Imagine a friend of yours said, so-and-so was singing your praises.

What's the most common response when somebody says that? What would you say? Ha ha ha ha ha ha! You're right. Ha ha ha ha ha! I'm sorry you feel that way.

Ha ha ha ha! But the most common response, or the second most common response, is a response of pleasant surprise.

Surprise and inquiry. Oh, that's nice. What were they saying? You would want to know what they were saying, wouldn't you? What were they saying? And I imagine your friend said, well, they weren't really saying anything.

[10 : 00] And they were just saying, praise Robert! Praise Robert! You know, or Stephen, you know. I know you don't hear that, but... Ha ha ha ha! Now, if that was what they said, if your friend said, somebody was singing your praises, oh, what did they say?

No, they were just praising your name, you know. You'd be like, I'm going to stay away from that person. Now, there is nothing wrong with saying, praise the Lord. It would be certainly more appropriate to hear a more sincere hallelujah than we currently hear most often.

But the point is, there's more to praising the Lord than simply saying, praise the Lord. Now, let me illustrate. Think of a few people, even here in this room, that you know. Okay, think of a few people that you know would speak about something that excites them, that brings them joy.

You know, maybe, maybe someone like Stephen would say, if only more people understood the game of rugby, it would bring more joy to their lives. Or yeah, maybe Robert would say, if only more people experienced the joy of building a Lego project from start to finish, they would have more joy in their lives.

Maybe John would say, if only more people had dogs, they would experience joy in their lives. Or perhaps someone just loves to talk about their children or their grandchildren or their husband or wife.

[11 : 22] You know, we know that. We know people. We can identify those things. You see, the expression, Hallelujah, isn't meant to be the limit of the praise to the Lord. In fact, in this Psalm, it seems like Hallelujah serves as bookends to a whole world of praise in between.

Psalm 150 itself is the grand finale of the book of Psalms. And there's five books in the book of Psalms. And each of those five books ends with a doxology.

And then book five ends with five psalms of doxology from 145 to 150 with this psalm being the doxology of doxologies, the praise of praises.

The book of Psalms begins Psalm 1 and meditation of the law and ends in Psalm 150 with praise of his mighty deeds and his excellent greatness.

All kinds of prayers along the way, ups and downs, all kinds of prayers along the way. But the picture is that the one who does not walk in the way of wicked, but delights and meditates on the word of God is blessed.

[12 : 32] And while there will be ups and downs and many prayers along the way, it will all culminate in praise and celebration in the end. Therefore, hallelujah is not the sole expression nor the limit of praise to God, but it is the culmination and exclamation of those who know who God is.

If you know God, if you know God, it will lead to many hallelujahs in your life. Now, if a person was, just please, Stephen, imagine this for a moment.

If a person was singing your praises, and believe me, people do, you just don't know it. But imagine, folks, if somebody was singing your praises, or if you were to have an appraisal in a job that you worked in, the content would go further than what the summary is.

And so, like in this psalm, it would likely include your actions and your character. God's actions and character are the focus here. It's entirely appropriate to express our praise for God by saying, hallelujah.

But let us not only express it in that way with that word, but expand on it in many other ways with many other words. You see, the whole idea of it is captured in something that Jeremiah said.

[13 : 48] And you might recognize this. You might recognize it more from something that Paul said. When Paul said, as it is written, let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.

Now, this is what it means to praise the Lord. It's not simply saying, hallelujah, but it's to boast about the Lord, to sing his praises, or as this psalm says, to speak about his mighty deeds and his excellent greatness.

You see, when Paul quotes that in 1 and 2 Corinthians, this is what it says in Jeremiah 9. Thus says the Lord, Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom.

Let not the mighty man boast in his might. Let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth.

For in these things I delight, declares the Lord. What is it to boast in the Lord? It's that excitement and joy of understanding and knowing who God is, knowing that he's the only one, he's the one who practices steadfast love.

[14 : 57] He's the one who practices justice and righteousness on the earth. Why does he delight that people should boast in him in this way? It's not because he's egotistical.

And it's not only because it is due to him and he is worthy. He is worthy. But it's because by boasting about the Lord, you're making him known in a world of darkness and lies.

You're making known in a world of darkness and lies the truth about who God really is. Now Paul mentions this, this word to boast elsewhere in his writings.

In fact, he talks about boasting about a church. He's talking about this collection, you know, that he's receiving money from all different churches to take to Jerusalem for the poor. And he says about this particular church that my boast in you might not be in vain.

You know, and what he's really saying is, I've been telling people how generous you are. Don't let me down. Have you ever put a good word in for somebody and you're like, oh boy, I hope they don't let me down.

[16 : 01] And here's the deal. Here's the deal. You can never say too much about God that somebody will be let down when they meet God. You are never going to let someone down by what goodness you say about God.

You can never say too much. What is it to boast about the Lord but to make known his mighty deeds and his excellent greatness in a world that is confused about who he is?

Now isn't it true that there's much misconception about who God is? It's obvious in our culture, in our town, in our families, and all over the place. Misconception about who God is.

It's all over the place but it's not a new thing. You see, the misconception that came from deception all the way back in the garden. The serpent lied about God's character.

Ever since, in every single culture, there has been misconception about who God is and what he is like. Throughout the Bible, God reveals himself and his character to many people but it's not just in a vacuum.

[17 : 08] It's not in neutral grounds. It's against the flow of misconception about who he is and what he's like. And this is the same with Jesus, isn't it? Misconception about him.

And when Jesus came, he was revealing what the Father was like against the grain of people who didn't know him. People did not recognize or know Jesus because they had many misconceptions about the Father.

Jesus said that he only does and says what the Father, what he hears the Father say and do. Jesus said that if you've seen him, you've seen the Father.

Hebrews 1 says that Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature. Colossians 2 says that he's the image of the invisible God. John 1 says that no one's ever seen God.

No one has ever seen God but him, Jesus, the only God who is at the Father's sight, he has made him known. You see, like in Jeremiah, Jesus had wisdom, Jesus had might, Jesus had riches but he did not count equality with God as something to be grasped.

[18 : 18] He came not to boast about himself, he came not to glorify himself but to make God known to man. To reveal God in a world of misconception and to save man from that darkness and deception so that they might know God and see his glory for themselves.

to know God. So what is it to praise the Lord? What is it to boast in the Lord? Do we not say our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name?

Is that not the same in this psalm? Praise God. Praise him in his sanctuary in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his mighty deeds. Praise him according to his excellent greatness.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Praise him with all the instruments of earth, with all the things that he's given us. You see, when we begin to be enraptured in praise, is that not his will been done on earth as it is in heaven?

In heaven, right now, there is praise like no other happening, exalting the Lord that they know and see and see his glory.

[19 : 34] Oh, that we could match that. Then we would see his kingdom come, his will be done here on earth as it is in heaven. When the world hears that kind of praise, they are seen his will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Surely, when his people come together, give us this day our daily bread, we say. Paul would say, whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do it for the glory of God.

So what is it to praise the Lord? What is it to boast in the Lord? Surely, when his people come together, we ought to do this. We ought to sing his praises, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God and whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Yeah, this doesn't limit our praise. This doesn't limit our praise to when we come together. Surely, if one is to boast in the Lord, or as Jeremiah says, if one is to boast that he understands and knows God, it is not to say that we know him and others don't.

To boast in the Lord is not to say, I know God and you don't. Nah, nah, nah, nah, nah. Or as my wee boy would say, nah, nah, banana. That's not what it means to boast.

[20 : 56] But to boast in the Lord. It's not just to go about saying, hallelujah, hallelujah. Certainly we should. But by boasting of the goodness of God, of his mighty deeds and his excellent greatness for the very purpose so that others might have a more truthful picture of who he is.

You want people to know what Jesus is like? Well, just go and boast about him. You want people to know who God really is against all this misconception. Go and boast about who he is.

Boast about what he's done in your life. About his mighty deeds to save us. About his excellent greatness of who he really is. Now, how can we do that?

Perhaps when we're not feeling up to it. I was thinking about this when I was preparing this. There were times when I was anxious about things, other things. And I thought to myself, how can I go up on Sunday?

How can I go and speak about praise when all I'm thinking about is my anxieties? How can I speak about praise when I just don't feel like things are going right? How can I speak about God's goodness when it just doesn't feel like I know what his goodness feels like right now?

[22 : 16] Folks, is that not the most appropriate time to remind ourselves that God is good? Is that not the purpose of these things? Is it not in the midst of his trials that Job said the Lord gives and the Lord takes away?

Blessed be the name of the Lord. Because the schemes of the devil are that we should forget that he is good. Is that not a lie in the very first place in the garden?

God is not good. All this stuff in Genesis 1, everything that God did, he said, was good. Then the devil comes along and says, nah, he's not good. Is it not in the midst of our trials and struggles that we ought to most remind ourselves that God is good?

We don't need to feel it to praise God. All the more we should remind one another that he is good. He is good. God is good all the time and all the time God is good.

Because is not the world in much misconception about God? In fact, when the world looks on at believers and sees the kind of things that believers go through, does that not make them say, how can there be a God when this God that you believe in allows you to go through that?

[23 : 36] No, no, no, no. God is good. Or when the world accuses you, like Job's friends, you must have done something wrong. No, God is good. Or when the devil would say to God, they only are faithful to you because you hedged them in.

They only praise you because it's going well with them. Is that true? May it not be so. May it not be so that I would only praise God when things are going well for me.

I pray to God that that is not so. But that we would remind ourselves of God's goodness. And that we would remember in Job's story, his trials and struggles were not the end of the story.

And our trials and struggles are not the end of the story. You see, we all talk about something. We all boast every now and then. We all talk with excitement and joy. Something precious to us.

And so, what is it to praise the Lord or to boast in the Lord except to let the overflow of love and joy and excitement of what he has done and who he is? Pour out of our lips at all times and all places.

[24 : 46] Because there's no shortage of lies and rumours going around about Jesus. No shortage of him. No shortage of lies and rumours about who God is. Yet the great thing is that it's not only in preaching the gospel, nor intentional evangelism, nor in mission work.

that's not the only place that's confined to revealing who God is. But it is through the praises of his people that God has made known to the world. Let the people of Jesus boast about him in all nations.

Let those of us who know Jesus sing his praises. Let those of us who know Jesus tell of his mighty deeds and excellent greatness. Let us speak of who we know him to be in a way that shows the glory and joy of knowing him to those who do not yet know him.

Let us speak about our Lord and Saviour as the light in life that we know him to be for the sake of those who do not yet know light and life. I've often heard famous about famous artists and musicians and talented people who've died young and people would say it's such a shame.

What wasted talent that they died young. But the truth is any talent that's not used to glorify God is wasted talent. Were these things not given by God in the first place?

[26 : 11] Were they not supposed to resound with his praise and glory? Should it not praise God and glorify him and his world with the gifts that he has given? You see the truth is that the world has no shortage of misconceptions about who God is.

A truth that the world does not know and that many of us Christians at times forget is that there's far more to praise about God than we could possibly fathom. There's more to praise the Lord about, more to boast about Jesus, more to say about God's mighty deeds and excellent greatness than our lips and lives could ever contain or encapsulate.

There are times when people are rightly in that place but as Jesus said, even the rocks themselves would cry out if the people didn't. We can never, we can never be in danger of praising God too much.

We can never be in danger of boasting about the glory and goodness of Jesus too much. We're always in the other end of the spectrum. But with every word that we breathe and with every breathed word, we say something in our lives.

So I want us just for one wee moment just to stop, calm our minds. I want everyone to take a deep breath. I want everyone to acknowledge the breath that they're taking right now.

[27 : 42] Take a breath. Feel that breath. Slow your mind. Acknowledge the breath. And ask yourself, where did you get that breath from?

Where does that come from? How is it that you can breathe in the first place? Did not God give you that breath? Was it not in the beginning when God made man that he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life?

You see, the final line of this psalm tells everything that has breath to praise the Lord. And it's not just because he is worthy, he is. But it is because everything that has breath gets its breath from the Lord.

Therefore, render unto God what is his. With the very breath that God has given you, praise him. Doesn't matter who you are or what you believe, your breath comes from God.

And so the most appropriate thing that you can ever do with that breath is praise the Lord. God, again, not merely saying hallelujah or only in singing, but the most appropriate thing that you can possibly do with the breath that God has given you is to use it to sing his praises, to speak out into his creation true things about his deeds and his character, to use your breath to boast about who he is.

[29 : 04] It's what we've been created for, folks. That with our lives and our breath and our words we may speak and sing and rejoice in who he is. And this will culminate in glory, where it won't be so much about revealing him to those who do not know him, but it will be about every voice and all of creation coming together in harmony with one another to glorify and praise their maker and rapturous joy.

You see, Psalm 150, the last psalm, points to the fact that in the end, it ends in praise. This is what we will experience in the end.

That all our trials and all our struggles and all our sorrows will come to an end, but our praise will come to harmony and our joy will be complete.

Finally, we will be home with the Lord. We will see his glory and we will say together, Hallelujah. Amen.

Let me pray and we're going to sing. O God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, we give you praise for who you are.

[30 : 21] You are our Lord and Savior. You are creator of all things and the one who redeems us. In you there is no darkness at all, but only pure light.

In you there is life and life everlasting. And you have given us this because of your steadfast love and your great mercy towards us.

Yet though we were still enemies to you, you sent your Son to die for us, that we might know you and that we might have forgiveness in life in his name. And so we thank you that we are here first and foremost because you made us and gave us breath.

And secondly, because you called about his darkness. He called us out of darkness into your marvelous light through Jesus Christ, your Son. He is our Savior. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings.

May the world know who he is. May all creation and everything that has breath. Praise the Lord.