

# A Glorious Voice

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[ 0 : 00 ] I'm a pastor at Geneva Campus Church in Madison.! Psalm 29.

And I'd invite you to do the same if you have a Bible with you or if there are a few Bibles or whatever Bibles there might be around, whether that's on your screen or something else. You're welcome to look at that.

Before we do that, it's helpful to remember, I think, what we do when we look at the Psalms, what we're actually looking at. We have this idea, perhaps, that the Psalms are a book of private and personal prayers.

And they certainly are that. We can pray them in the quiet of our own room. But it's important to remember that, historically, they were more than that.

They were a song book for the people of God. And the thing about songs is that they shape your loves, the things that you care about.

[ 1 : 25 ] They shape your sense of the story that you're living in. So if you have a song in your heart that is telling you that life is beautiful, you're going to approach life a different way than if you are primarily thinking of a song where everything is cynical and damaged.

So this is why the Psalms shape us in an important way and why we need to pray them and sing them and meditate on them often. And the question that I want to ask before we read the Psalm is simply, what would this do to you as a church if you were to sing this song, if you were to meditate on it?

What effect would this produce in this church? And as I read, I'll invite you just to pay attention to any repeated words.

I am going to ask you to say a word after this so there is some participation involved. So be ready. So Psalm 29. Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings.

Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name. Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.

[ 2 : 46 ] The voice of the Lord is over the waters. The God of glory thunders. The Lord over many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful.

The voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars. The Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf.

And Syria like a young wild ox. The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness.

The Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth and strips the forests bare. And in his temple all cry glory.

The Lord sits enthroned over the flood. The Lord sits enthroned as king forever. May the Lord give strength to his people. May the Lord bless his people with peace.

[ 3 : 48 ] This is God's word and it's given to us to remind us that we don't live by bread alone. But by every word that comes from the mouth of God. So let's pray together. Father we give you thanks for this moment.

Thank you that we get to listen to you. We pray that you would open our hearts to receive what you have to say to us. And that the words of my mouth and the meditation of all of our hearts would be acceptable in your sight.

Oh Lord. Our rock. And our redeemer. In Jesus Christ's name we pray. Amen. So just to ask. Quiz time. What were the words that you heard repeated in this psalm?

Voice. Very good. Okay. So that's actually. I want to zero in on voice. There are. There's. The primary voice in the psalm is the voice of the Lord.

It's used seven times. But there are other voices in the psalm too. So that's why I'm going to look at two things with you today. I want to look at the voice of creatures.

[ 4 : 57 ] Of those things that are made by God. So created voices. Created voices. And then the voice of the Lord. The creator. Created voices. The creator's voice.

So when we look at created voices. What do we see? Well right away. Verse one. Ascribe to the Lord. Oh heavenly beings. Ascribe to the Lord.

Glory. And strength. So the first thing that we hear any created thing doing in this psalm is ascribing worth to God.

Now ascribing worth is just another way of speaking about something we do every Sunday. Which is worship. Ascribing worth. Describing God as one who is worthy of praise and adoration.

This is what it means to worship. And they are ascribing a particular thing. If we look again at verse one. Ascribe to the Lord. Glory. And strength.

[ 6 : 01 ] Glory. Is the word they ascribe to God. Can you say the word glory? Glory. There we go. That was really nice. So.

Glory. Now that's a word that in church is common. But maybe outside of church we don't hear it very much. In my experience. And I'm not a big sports guy. But I hear the word glory spoken of primarily in sports contexts.

Right. It's the glory of an athlete. And sometimes. Maybe most of the time. It's spoken of in the past tense. Right. That's something that's faded. Or past. It's the glory days.

They're long gone. And when we talk about an athlete in that way. We're talking about the honor.

The sort of renown of an athlete. So that's a sense that's going on here.

And we can see that in verse two. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name. So this is about the renown. The honor of the Lord.

[ 7 : 02 ] But in the Bible. The word glory can also mean more than that. One of the things that it can mean is we can get a glimpse of it in verse one.

Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. So glory can also be. If you've ever heard somebody described as having gravitas.

Is that a familiar term? Or they've had a kind of gravity to their presence. Right. They are weighty.

And we use that to talk about somebody who seems to be substantial.

Important. To really matter. And this is a way of speaking about God. As being more real. Than the realest things we experience in this room and in our lives.

This is God's glory as his weightiness. But there's a third way. That we can use the word glory. And this is the way that you might talk about the glory of the sun.

[ 8 : 04 ] Or of a shining part of a building or something. Some aspect of radiance or brilliance. And we get that too in verse two.

Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness. That God is also radiant and beautiful. So heavenly beings are praising God for his glory.

They're praising him for his honor. His weightiness. His beauty. And let's just pause right there.

Because these heavenly beings. We need to remember who they are.

In the Bible. When an angel appears to someone. What is the first thing. That they often have to say. Do not be afraid.

What does that tell you. About the glory. Of these heavenly beings. That it is of such an order of magnitude. That ordinary people. Are afraid.

[ 9 : 05 ] Of them. And yet. Here they are. Ascribing. Glory. And strength. To God. This is what the voices in heaven do.

But there are also voices on earth. In verse nine. The end of verse nine. Just a brief phrase. All in his temple. All cry.

Glory. Now. In the original language. That phrase. All cry. Can also be rendered. Everything in it. So. In the temple.

Everything in it. From the outer court. To the holy of holies. Everything is crying. Glory. And that includes. Anyone who were to walk in. Every person. In the temple.

Is crying. Glory. Now. If you were to walk. Into the temple. Do you know what it would look like? If you've read the descriptions.

[ 10 : 01 ] In other parts of the Bible. In places like Exodus. Or in first and second Kings. These are parts of the Bible. By the way. That often. In our Bible. Or your Bible reading plans. This is where

those go to die.

The description of the temple. And we struggle to get through these. But the important thing is. What does it describe? What is the picture that is painted.

Of the temple. And the answer is. It is a building. Of absolute glory. As you walk. Further and further in.

There is more and more gold. Everything is. Gilded. With gold. And the decorations. Are all meant to look like.

Flowers. Trees. In other words. It's meant to look like Eden. It's meant to be a picture. Of the garden. And that's a helpful reminder.

[10:56] Because in the Bible. The garden. Is meant to be a temple. And it was meant to extend. Over the whole earth. And so. This. Small phrase.

In Psalm 29. Is showing us. Something really important. Which is that. The entire earth. Was made. To be. A temple. For the glory.

Of God. All creation. Is made. To praise. This is what. Created voices. Show us. They call us.

To join them. In praise. This is the thing. That we. Were made for. As G.K. Chesterton. Puts it. In his book. Orthodoxy.

A creation. A praise. Should be the. Pulsing. Rhythm. Of. Created life. This is the thing. That we should be doing. More than any other thing.

[11:53] This is what characterizes. Life. As a creature. And we. Do well. To remember. That we live in God's world. And that. When we look around. In the morning.

Maybe you stepped outside. And you heard. Sounds. Of birds. Or squirrels. Or other animals. Seeming to be louder. Than they are. At other times in the day. And you can have the same experience.

In the evening. As the sun is beginning to set. And there's an explanation. For that. Right. That you could ask. Some smart person. Who knows about these creatures. But. The Bible.

Invites us. To imagine. What is happening. In a deeper. And more real way. Which is that. All creation. Morning. And evening. Is praising.

God. And you're invited. To do the same thing. And it is. Actually the case. That. You are never. More human.

[12:49] Than when you are praising. God. For his glory. This is the most human thing. You can do. And if you feel. Any measure. Of failure.

In your life. If you're wondering. If you're. If your life. Has mattered. In any way. If you are here. And you've praised. You are already. Doing the thing.

That you were made to do. So. On the ledger. Of God's. Success. You are already. Doing. The thing you were made to do. And this is. A glorious. And honorable thing. That we get to participate in. But. That's just created voices.

And like I said. The main voice. In the psalm. Is the voice of the creator. So we do well. To pay attention to that. As well. So like I mentioned earlier. The word voice.

[13:41] Is used. Seven times. In the psalm. Can somebody say voice? Voice. Okay. I like when I said somebody. And then more people said it. That's great. So. Voice.

Is the word. That gets used. Seven times. In this psalm. And any time in the Bible. A word gets used. Seven times. You want to pay close. Attention. To that. So what's going on?

Well. As we look at. How the voice of the Lord. Is described. It begins. To be clear. That the imagery. We have here. Is of a rolling. Thunderstorm. The voice of the Lord.

Is over the waters. You can picture. The Mediterranean. The God of glory. Thunders. The voice of the Lord. Is powerful. It breaks.

The cedars. Shakes. The earth. It moves. From the north. To the south. Of Israel. And.

[14:37] This. Storm. Seems to be. Based on its description. It covers the whole land of Israel. I don't know. If you've ever experienced. A storm. That is. Massive enough. To cover. The land of an entire country.

Maybe even just. Our own state. This is the picture. That's. That's. Being evoked here. Now. When I was a kid. I had. Unshakable. Confidence.

In my parents. To protect me. From anything. I don't know. If this is the case for you. Maybe you. Grew up. And. And you just knew. You had. Like certainty. Your parents would protect you. From whatever.

Happened. And there was. Only one time. In my life. Where that was not. The case. And it was a very. Ordinary. Thing. But it was. Whenever there was. A massive.

Thunderstorm. Suddenly. It became clear. That. No human being. Could. Overpower. This thunderstorm.

[15:33] The earth. Seemed. To shake. That the windows. Were rattling. This is clearly. Something beyond. What my parents. Could handle. We would hear.

Booming. Peals of thunder. The voice of the Lord. Shakes the wilderness. We might see lightning. It sizzles. It crackles.

With energy. Sometimes. It strikes a tree. And starts a fire. The voice of the Lord. Breaks the cedars. The voice of the Lord. Flashes forth.

Flames. With fire. A severe enough storm. Leaves you. Trembling. And the way that our psalm. Describes that. Is. It's like. When a deer.

Gives birth. The voice of the Lord. Makes a deer. Give birth. It's like. Birth pangs. The trembling. Of the storm. And the aftermath. Of the storm. The voice of the Lord.

[16:27] Strips. The forests. There. It's devastation. So. The poetry. Of the psalm. Is really painting. A word picture. Of what verse four says.

The voice of the Lord. Is powerful. The voice of the Lord. Is full. Of majesty. And that would be amazing. If that was all it said. But.

We have to look further. Verse 10 says. The Lord. Sits. Enthroned. Over. The flood. So we look at a storm.

And we're confronted. With the sheer power. At work. In creation. And at the same time. The psalm. Is inviting us. To look at that. And to say. I know someone. Stronger than that.

I know that God. Is more powerful. And sits enthroned. Over. This. Flood. This storm. This is what helps.

[17:24] Make sense. Of. Ordinary parts of the Bible. Like Genesis 1. Where God speaks. A word. And things come. Into existence. It also makes sense.

Of. Why we're sometimes. Hesitant. To listen. To the voice of God. Like the Israelites. In Exodus 20. They beg. Not to be spoken to. Any further. Because the voice.

Of the Lord. Is. Powerful. In a way that is. Scary. At times. This is an invitation. To us.

To remember. God's glory. The voice of his glory. Even in the storm. Sometimes we use that. In a metaphorical way. To speak about a hard.

Thing that we're going through. But I mean that. Actually. Literally. The next time. There's a major storm. Remember. God. Remember his glory. And his voice.

[18:19] And remember to think. In that moment. This. Storm. Which seems so powerful. Is. A fraction. Of. Of. The power. And glory.

Of God. He is the one who sits. Enthroned. Over this. Now. There's a danger here. In comparing. God's voice. To a thunderstorm. And it's a danger. That the psalmist. Is. Very alert to. It's this danger. Of thinking. That just like.

A storm. Seems to just have. No boundaries. It is. Full. Power. Sheer. Blind. Destructive. Force. We can begin to think.

If God is like that. He must be. Terrifying. In all of the wrong ways. He must have. Unlimited power. And be ready.

[19:14] To use it. To crush people. To use it. To use it. But that. Is not. The only way. The voice. Of the Lord. Is used. There's the voice.

Of thunder. But there's the voice. Of peace. So that same mountain. Where the people of God. Said. Moses. Do not let. God speak to us. Anymore.

We might die. If he speaks to us. That same. Mountain. Centuries later. A prophet. Named Elijah. Comes to that mountain. And do you know what he. Sees.

He sees a mighty storm. And the Lord's voice. Is not in that storm. Rather. It is in. A still. Small. Voice.

The voice of the Lord. Is full of power. And. And. The voice of the Lord. Is capable. Of peace.

[20:11] Of gentleness. Of whispering. Of peace. This is why. The author. Of the letter. To the Hebrews. Says that we haven't come. To this.

Mountain. Of blazing fire. And darkness. And gloom. And a tempest. And the sound of a trumpet. We have come. Rather. To the city. Of the living God. To Jesus.

The mediator. Of a new covenant. To a voice. That speaks. Of peace. Of peace. So. What's the most. Powerful.

Word. That. The voice. Of the Lord. Speaks. The most. Powerful. Word. Is a word. Of blessing. Look at verse 11.

May the Lord. Give strength. To his people. May the Lord. Bless. His people. With peace. This. Is the most.

[ 21 : 06 ] Powerful. Word. Because this is. A miracle. This is bringing. Dead. Souls. To life. This is bringing. Enemies.

Of God. To reconciliation. Bringing them. Into fellowship. With him. There is no. Greater. Or more. Powerful. Act. That God. Does. Than to restore.

Broken. Sinners. To his presence. And it's good. To remind ourselves. That. This voice. Of the Lord. Which speaks. Everything.

Into existence. Became. Flesh. The word. Became. Flesh. And dwelled. Among us. And as the apostle. Paul put it. He preached.

Peace. To those. Who are far off. And to those. Who are near. And when he. Encounters. A storm. And his disciples. Are afraid. For their life. He wakes up. And says.

[ 22 : 01 ] A word. To the storm. And it stops. And it becomes. Peaceful. So what does this mean? The voice of the Lord. Shows us.

That we have. If he speaks. A blessing. If he speaks. Peace to us. Then we have. An unshakable. Promise. We have a certainty.

That blessing. That peace. That there is nothing. That you can do. To overpower. That blessing. Of peace. That if your faith.

Is in Jesus. You are. Solidly. Located. In his love. And mercy. Like the most. Secure shelter.

From any storm. There is. Absolutely. Nothing. That can separate you. From the love. Of God. In Christ. Because the most. Powerful word. That the creator speaks.

[ 22 : 56 ] Is the word of blessing. So we've looked today. At created voices. Which call us to praise. That our existence. Is entirely. Aimed at praise.

Of God. And his glory. But when we listen. To the creator's voice. We also hear. The reason. For that praise. Which is. His marvelous. And magnificent. Love.

And blessing. And we can be assured. That we have. The grace. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let me close with this.

In the period. After. Our Old Testament. And before. The coming of Jesus. The. The people of God. Would gather.

For various festivals. And. They would. Appoint certain. Psalms. And other parts of the Bible. To be read. During those times. And. Psalm 29. Was.

[ 23 : 51 ] Appointed. For one. Particular festival. It's called. The festival. Of weeks. And. Do you know. What another name. For that festival. Is. Pentecost.

So. On one. Particular. Pentecost. Two. Thousand years ago. Or so. The voice. Of the Lord. Flashed forth. Flames. Of fire.

Only. These. Flames. Did not. Break. Or burn. Cedars. They broke. Open. And burned. In people's. Hearts. The voice.

Heard. In. Jerusalem. That day. Is. Of a new. Creation. People. Speaking. In all sorts. Of languages. And telling. Of God's.

Glorious. Works. God's. God's. Own. Word. Came. And dwelled. In the hearts. Of his people. And his spirit.

[ 24 : 53 ] Turned them into. Living. Temples. Therefore. Everyone. Who believes. In God's word. Made flesh. The one. Who is.

Himself. Our peace. Is enabled. By that same. Holy spirit. To become. Living. Temples. To the living God. And.

Everything. In us. Just like. Everything. In that temple. Is made. To praise. To cry out. Glory. So. Trust. In him. And be. Who you were made. To be. The first step. Is to sing. And to praise. God's glory. Glory.

Be. To the father. And to the son. And to the holy spirit. As it was in the beginning. Is now. And will be. Forever. Amen. Let's pray. Father.

[ 25 : 49 ] We give you thanks. For your. Grace to us. Thank you. That. In your power. You also. Draw near. And you show us. Your presence. We pray.

We pray. We might walk. In response. To this. As people. Of praise. As people. Who know. Your voice. And that by your holy spirit. You would enable us. To be living temples.

To your glory. We pray this. In Jesus name. Amen. My voice. My voice. My voice. My voice. My voice. My voice.