

Praise the King Over All the Earth

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[0 : 00] The following message was given at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at trinitygraceathens.com.

Psalm 47 Clap your hands, all peoples. Shout to God with loud songs of joy. For the Lord, the Most High, is to be feared, a great king over all the earth. He subdued peoples under us and nations under our feet.

He chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom he loves. God has gone up with a shout. The Lord with a sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God. Sing praises. Sing praises to our king.

[1 : 03] Sing praises. For God is the king of all the earth. Sing praises with a song. God reigns over the nations.

God sits on his holy throne. The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God.

He is highly exalted. This is the word of the Lord. Thank you. In the late spring of 1962, a fifth grader moved to a new town with his mom and his stepdad.

The boy's mom encouraged him to make some friends. Which then leads to a series of misadventures. The story is documented in the well-known cinematic masterpiece known as The Sandlot.

The boy, Scott Smalls, joins a group of boys who plays baseball every day at the neighborhood Sandlot. And one day, while playing, one of the boys smashes the cover off the team's ball.

[2 : 18] The only ball. With Smalls' stepdad being away on a business trip, Smalls decides to try to keep the game going by borrowing his stepdad's prized baseball from his trophy room.

Smalls brings the ball back to play with the guys and even hits his first home run with the ball. Now normally that would be the cause for much celebration.

But the ball landed in the yard of a monster dog known as the Beast. Smalls tells the guys in desperation, he has to get that ball back.

He just has to. But they think that it's a lost cause. That is until he tells them that it was a special ball from his dad's collection that some lady had given to him.

Yeah, she even signed her name on it. What's her name? Ruth. Baby Ruth. Babe Ruth? The boys can't believe it.

[3 : 29] And they are immediately, rightly so, moved into a panic. We've got to get that ball back, they yell at Smalls. And he's taking it back. He says, why? Because it was signed by Babe Ruth.

Yeah, but who is she? Who is she? The Sultan of Swat. The King of Crash. The Colossus of Clout. The Great Bambino. You mean that's the same guy? Oh. Smalls immediately hits the floor.

Suddenly sick at the thought of that ball signed by that player in the yard with that dog.

Well, the rest of the movie tracks their desperate attempts to retrieve the ball without being eaten by the beast. So what happened here?

[4 : 27] What happened? Why move from casual play to all-in focused mission? A focused response. The ball was still just the ball, wasn't it?

Well, the difference was that new information transformed their response. Smalls had drastically underestimated the value of this ball.

When the value was rightly revealed, the boys rightly responded. There was a revelation and a response.

A right action in response to truth. We do this all the time. For instance, we might say the house is on fire. That's a revelation of truth.

So then we might say, run! Right? That is a response to the truth. We can even switch the order, too, and it would be perfectly fine. It would make sense for us to say, run!

[5 : 28] The house is on fire! It makes sense that way. Well, this psalm is giving us a template for appropriate worship. Like the example, run!

The house is on fire. It begins with the right response. And then it substantiates it with the revelation. The why.

Act this way because of this truth. And we see two rounds of this response in revelation. Verse 1 shows us a right response.

What we should do. And then it anchors it in revelation. What God has done in verses 2 through 5. And then it does it again in verse 6. What we should do in response to what he has done.

Verses 7 through 9. So we're looking at words on a page. But the words are pointing us to glorious, true realities about who God is.

[6 : 30] What he has done and how we are to respond to this God. It reveals truth about who God really is and what he's done. It's new information for us to take in and to understand his value.

Then this truth is intended to instruct both our hearts and our hands. We are to feel rightly and act rightly in response to these truths.

So this psalm captures something greater than the great Bambino. Babe Ruth may be the king of swing, but God is the king of all the earth.

That's what this is showing us. And this king pursued us with his love and made us his people. So I believe that the main point for us this morning is quite simply.

Praise the king over all the earth with all that we've got for all that he's done. Praise the king over all the earth with all that we've got for all that he's done.

[7 : 30] And we're going to look at this psalm in two parts. Revelation, our God and what he's done. And then the responses that it called for.

Our bodies and what we do. Revelation and response. So point one, revelation, our God and what he's done.

Well, you can learn a lot about what a songwriter values by the content of their lyrics and their intended audience. Last year, a musician named Oliver Anthony recorded himself playing a song that he wrote and then he uploaded it to YouTube.

The song entitled, Rich Men North of Richmond, hit on issues that affect the working class. The video received over 5 million views in its first three days without any promotion.

The themes apparently struck a chord. But the psalm, the song that we're looking at, has also struck a chord. It has been viewed, not millions of times, but billions of times over the course of thousands of years as a part of the Jewish hymnal and the Christian scriptures have been translated into nearly a thousand different languages.

[8 : 51] It is a song written to engage God's gathered people. And the lyrics, if you look, are shockingly God-dominated. Just scan through. The word God appears eight times.

And the personal name of God, Yahweh, the Lord, all caps, appears at least twice. The song tunes our hearts to rightly see God as central.

He is the dominant theme of the lyrics. Not only does it repeatedly direct our attention to God, it highlights what kind of God he is. He's not just a detached, impersonal force out there somewhere. He's not uninvolved. No, he is presented as a king. A great king over all the earth. Verses 2 and 7 both make reference to this.

A king reigning over all nations. A king working on behalf of his people. Who comes to your mind when you think of power?

[9 : 57] Is it Napoleon? Or Genghis Khan who conquered massive portions of Asia? Maybe Hitler? Or Stalin? Or maybe it's the Godfather?

Whoever ranks the highest in our minds, the psalmist redirects our attention even higher. God is higher. Says that God is the most high.

God. It's one of his titles. So all of these are claims about who God is. But then look at verse 3. It takes us into what this God has done.

So in order to understand his rule, his dominion, his authority, we have to see him in relation to the world and the people. What has he done to establish his reign?

What are his records, his street cred? How has his power been demonstrated? I mean, just think about this. If someone claims repeatedly to be a king but has no people and has no place where he's ruling and he's had no demonstration of power, he's not seen as a king but as a crazy person.

[11:07] Right? He has no right to rule and he needs to be restrained. So what gives this God the right to be called king over all the earth?

The most high. Verse 3 says, He subdued peoples under us and nations under our feet. So the psalmist here is using this military language of conquest.

He's helping the singers recall God's action on their behalf. If you remember, God's people were slaves in Egypt for hundreds of years. And they were asking, how will we ever break free?

There was no earthly way for that to happen. God would have to do the impossible. And he did. He did. He raised up Moses to facilitate his miracles.

God demonstrated his power over the gods of Egypt and released his people from their bondage. God made a way when there was no way. He took them through the Red Sea and then he swallowed up their enemies.

[12:18] And where did they go from there? They went into the wilderness. God told them that he would be with them. He told them, don't just stay here.

Go into the promised land. Go in. I'll be with you. They sent these spies into the land. But then they came back with a negative report. If you remember, they saw the people in the land.

And they noticed that these dudes were really big. These guys were huge. They were scared. They came back petrified. They said, compared to them, we're like grasshoppers.

There's no way we can do this. But what did they forget? God had just demonstrated his ability in the midst of their inability in Egypt.

The world's premier superpower. God is able to make a way when there is no way. So Joshua, one of the spies, had faith. And he attempts to remind them of this very fact.

[13:21] In Numbers 14, this is what he says to the crowd. If the Lord delights in us, he will bring us into this land and he will give it to us. A land that flows with milk and honey.

Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not fear the people of the land. For they are bred for us. Their protection is removed from them. And the Lord is with us.

Do not fear them. And then the Lord said to Moses, How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me?

In spite of all the signs that I've done among them. Well, eventually, the spy, Joshua, takes the helm.

And he leads the people in trust into the promised land. How does he do it? He does it in utter dependence on God.

[14:20] It's the only way to make sense of what happened. God subdued the peoples under us. So these are the types of battles that the psalmist is calling to mind here.

It's real stuff. This is why you're here. This is why you exist. Real moments of God's action on their behalf. You would think that this psalm is just limited to the people of Israel.

To their story. But you may be surprised to see something here. Who is the us in this psalm? In verse 3 that it's talking about. Well, if you look back up to verse 1.

It says, Clap your hands, all peoples. All peoples. All throughout the psalms. The word peoples is a reference to the Gentile nations.

The non-Jews. The only addressees in this whole psalm, if you scan back through it, are non-Jews.

[15:26] God is not just the God of Israel. He's depicted as the God over all the earth. Look at verses 8 and 9.

God reigns over the nations. The princes of the peoples. Here you go again. Gather as the people of the God of Abraham.

So here we have a vision of non-Jews gathering together as the people of the God of Abraham. To sing and to celebrate Yahweh as their king.

Do you remember God's promise to Abraham? Genesis 12. The very first book of the Bible. God calls him out. He says, I will bless those who bless you.

And him who dishonors you, I will curse. And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. So which is it?

[16:29] Are the peoples of the earth to be subdued? Or are they to sing and to clap? Are they enemies?

Or are they allies here? That's what this is confronting us with. Well, if you see verse 6, you'll see something very important. The people of this psalm are singing praises to our king.

Our king. The people singing and clapping are those who have placed their trust in Yahweh as their king.

So the key to being associated with the people of Abraham rests in the allegiance to the king of Abraham. This is what we see. Even in Joshua's day, as they were looking to enter into the promised land, they interacted with Rahab, the Canaanite prostitute.

Keep in mind that Rahab began this conversation with three strikes against her. As she's talking with these spies. First, she was a woman in a society where men were the dominant ones and often used their strength oppressively.

[17 : 49] Strike one. Strike two. She was ethnically a Canaanite, the sworn enemies of the Israelites. Strike three.

She was a prostitute. She was a prostitute. A compromised, unclean, broken, shameful woman. So she comes into the conversation with three strikes against her.

She's out before she even starts. Listen to what she says in Joshua 2. I know that the Lord has given you the land.

That's Yahweh. Has given you the land. And that the fear of you has fallen upon us. And that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt.

And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted and there was no spirit left in any man because of you. For the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

[19 : 00] This is the three strike woman. Rahab, the Canaanite prostitute, heard of what happened in Egypt. And the news reshaped what she thought about this God.

New information. It was her Babe Ruth moment. Her understanding of value shifted. Rahab believed and she placed her trust in the God of Abraham.

This is the king of all the earth. The one who makes a way when there is no way. Abraham placed his trust in God. Following suit, Rahab placed her trust in God.

She was not judged. But instead joined the congregation. Looking forward to the fulfillment of God's promises by faith. Not only was this three strike Canaanite prostitute spared from death.

She was used to bring forth life. In the kindness of God, Rahab became the mother of a boy named Boaz. Who would grow up to marry a foreign woman himself.

[20 : 05] Who placed her trust in God. And her name was Ruth. And Ruth had a son named Obed. Who became the father of Jesse. Who had a son named David.

And in the fullness of time, God sent forth his son in the line of King David. To be the final king. The reality is that we are just like Rahab.

Every one of us. We are all three strike rebels standing before a conquering king. Scripture says all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

How can we be made right with the king of all the earth? God decisively made a way when there was no way.

Through Jesus Christ. If you look at verse 5. It says that God has gone up with a shout.

[21 : 12] The Lord with the sound of a trumpet. This language pictures the king ascending to a throne. Amends shouts of celebration and victory.

However, the gospels give us a fuller picture. Of the king's coronation ceremony. As verse 5 says, the king has gone up with a shout.

If you remember, the sign was fixed to the wood above him. Jesus of Nazareth.

The king of the Jews. It was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. So that all peoples would be able to read and understand the charge against him.

The king has gone up with a shout. The king has gone up the hill of Golgotha to receive a crown of thorns with a shout.

[22 : 29] Hail the king of the Jews! The king has gone up. He's gone up onto the cross.

With a shout. Forgive them, Father. They know not what they do. The king has gone up.

He's gone up as a cursed one before the judgment seat of the Father. Absorbing the full punishment for the sin of his people. With a shout.

It is finished. The king has gone up. He's gone up from the grave with a shout. He is not here.

He is risen. The king's gone up. He's gone up into the clouds with a shout. Go into all the world.

Make disciples of all the peoples.

[23 : 24] I am coming back. Surely I am coming soon. The king has gone up with a shout. But one day he will reverse. And as the song so wonderfully said, The trump shall resound.

And the Lord shall descend. The king is coming back for his own. And he will make all things right. One day every knee will bow. And every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. So for all of you three strike sinners who crawl before God.

And you feel compromised and unclean and broken and ashamed. The king of all the earth has come for you. And he spread wide his arms to welcome you into his kingdom.

For all the peoples who place their trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of sin. They will be made right before the God of Rahab. Now, welcome into the kingdom.

[24 : 27] The invitation is for you to take freely. And this is why Paul writes in the New Testament in Galatians 3. Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham. Saying, in you shall all the nations be blessed.

So then those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. This is the revelation of our God and what he has done.

Welcome all you who believe in Christ the king. Welcome is the declaration he waves over you.

Welcome all you who believe in Christ the king. Welcome all you who believe in Christ the king.

Welcome all you who believe in Christ the king. So what is our response to this king and what he's done?

Point two, response. Our bodies and what we do. So when we begin to see God rightly, it affects us.

[25 : 33] We're called to respond appropriately to this value with our whole being. Everything we are, including our bodies. Verse 1.

If you look at it, it says, clap. Shout loud songs of joy. Not just any songs, but loud songs. Shout. Verse 6.

Sing. Sing. Sing. Verse 7. Sing. Sing praises. Sing praises to this king. Sing. Our whole being, including our bodies, responding.

I'd like for us to consider five short observations about how we are to respond to the revelation of the king of all the earth with our bodies. Observation 1.

We are not less than our bodies. God created our bodies for good. You see, there is a connection between the praise of God and our bodies. It's not limited to the silence of the heart.

[26 : 38] God never meant us to respond to him purely in an intellectual, disembodied way. As if the heart is somehow superior to the body. One popular philosophical movement called Gnosticism believed in this harsh division between the body and the soul.

The physical world was corrupt and bad, while the spiritual world was eternal and good. But the God of the Bible made the physical world and he made our bodies.

In Genesis, he declared them very good. Before there was sin, he said, this is very good. So we're not just souls that have to put up with a body.

We are embodied souls. That's who we are as a whole. So our bodies and souls belong together. In fact, the very hope of the Christian life is that our souls will be reunited with a physical body that will be able to withstand eternity.

So God created our bodies for good. Observation 2 is that our bodies belong to God.

[27 : 52] Our bodies belong to God. If God is the king over all the earth and he is our king, then we belong to him. Our whole being, including our bodies, exists for his purposes now.

1 Corinthians 6, 19 through 20. So glorify God in your body.

So to express your praise, our praise to God with your bodies, it's actually a form of pushing back against culture.

If you want to know a way that we can push back against the culture and the current, express praise to God with your body. It is a display that you do not belong to yourself.

Think about that. You belong to the Lord. Your whole being, including your body, exists for his praise. So display it to the world. I don't belong to myself anymore.

[29 : 09] Observation 3. The physical expressions of our bodies extend the reach of our praise. When I was in college, I worked as a groundskeeper.

And one of my favorite jobs was to cruise around on this little golf cart with one of those trash grabber stick things, the claw. And I would pick up litter around the campus.

That trash grabber claw was like a four-foot extension of my arm. It was wonderful. Well, in a similar way, our physical expressions are tools that extend the dynamic reach of our hearts and our minds. Think of the tone of our voices. If we talk without tone, we are like robots. That would be very distracting if I did that the whole time.

It's the variation of tone that makes us sound more human, more relational. It communicates more deeply and broadly. So our ability, if tone is extracted, our ability to understand and even to express what we want is actually diminished.

[30 : 17] Tone extends the reach. Volume is a tool that extends the dynamic reach. Why do middle schoolers always get in trouble at the library? They get excited.

Their volume goes up. It's a tool that extends the reach. Likewise, clapping and shouting. Woo! Hallelujah! They're tools that more fully express the proper response of praise.

God gave us our bodies in order to praise him more fully. It extends the reach. Observation number four. Clapping, shouting, singing are all timeless and transcultural expressions of joy and unity.

Why these specific expressions? Why clapping, shouting? Why not clucking like a chicken or grinding our teeth as loud as we can? Why these? Why these? We were just watching the Olympic highlight videos a couple nights ago with my kids.

And they want to watch all sorts of random ones that I never would have clicked on. So at one point we were watching women's ping pong. We watched about seven minute highlight reel of that.

[31 : 30] Not only was it entertaining, surprisingly, to watch people playing ping pong so intensely that they're sweating. And I can't even see the ball. We were equally, if not more fascinated by these two ladies letting out these like screech owl shouts of joy after scoring a big point.

I will not try to mimic it here. One competitor was from Korea. The other was from Japan. But the shouts of triumph transcended the language barriers.

Then we watched tennis after that. China and Poland, shouts of joy and clapping. Then we watched beach volleyball. U.S. versus Brazil. Shouts of joy, clapping, jumping, fist pumping.

Clapping and shouting are the natural global overflow of human emotion. It's fascinating. But in addition to clapping and shouting, we see singing.

Singing loud songs and singing praises to our king. Why songs? As a kid, my family lived in Tallahassee, Florida for a little while.

[32 : 38] And I know this is going to be a touchy subject. But in the early 90s, the Florida State Seminoles were an incredible football program. Any Knowles fans out there? There's like three of you.

Bobby Bowden was one of the winningest coaches in college football. And he was at the helm of the team. And my grandparents lived about a mile away from the stadium. So on game days, you could stand outside their house and you could hear around 80,000 fans unite their voices for the Tomahawk war chant.

If you watch college football, you know what I'm talking about. Oh! Oh! You can hear it for miles. What was that?

It was a form of voices joining together to display their allegiance. Joining together to display their allegiance.

Songs have the ability to creatively and jubilantly express a truth in a replicable way. So that others can join in the response with one voice.

[33 : 50] Gives traction pads for the heart and the hands to join together in allegiance. Well, maybe you think to yourself, I'm a really reserved person. I don't sing loud.

I don't do the hand thing. It's okay to be a reserved person. You don't have to be the loudest voice in the room. But what are the occasions for your maximal joy and your physical expressiveness? For you. What does that look like? What are those moments? What is worthy of your most joyful clapping and your loudest songs?

And where does the king of all the earth, the most high, fit into that? That's what we want to draw out. Observation number five. Physical expression pushes us out of passivity.

Or maybe you feel reluctant to be physically expressive because you don't feel the weight of the scriptures or the songs. Maybe you think it would be inauthentic to respond in such a way that you weren't really truly feeling on the inside.

[35 : 04] I think verse seven, if you look at it, it gives us an important note. After commanding us to sing in the previous verse, verse seven returns back to a revelation.

By reminding us that God is the king. God is the king.

Therefore, sing praises. God is the king. Therefore, sing praises. We don't just respond to what we feel. We respond to what is true. What is true.

We're not attempting to conjure up a feeling. That's not what we're doing here. We are being reminded of truth about who we are in light of our king. That's why we gather.

Sometimes we raise our hands just in desperation. Like a vulnerable child reaching up to its mother. Perhaps you want to believe and you're fighting for faith in the midst of a season of apathy or a season of doubt or confusion.

[36 : 08] Then it may be appropriate to express your desperation to cling to a truth by lifting your voice up and lifting your hands up. Completely appropriate.

Other times you respond physically with joy. When you're reminded of deliverance or victory. Very wonderful. If I could encourage you with just one point of application.

It would be to practice meditating on the application of truth during our gatherings. I'll say it again.

Practice meditating on the application of truth during our gatherings.

It takes practice. While we're singing, focus on the lyrics. What is it that we're saying? What truths are we singing about our king? What has he done and what is he doing?

And how does this come to bear on your life right now? That's why we want to press those things into our hearts and our minds. What are we singing? How does this come to bear on my life right now?

[37 : 14] Has he provided for you unexpectedly? Has he been merciful to you? Are you walking through inexplicable pain or suffering right now?

Reach out to him. Lift your voice. Remind yourself and how it applies to your life right here and right now. And if I could broaden that category a little bit more.

One of the most glorious things about the gathered church is to praise God with his people. So while you meditate on the application of truth, scan the room of the king's people.

Look around. Don't close your eyes and separate yourself all the time. I'd encourage you to scan around the room at the king's people.

It's a unique moment in the week where we're gathered with his people. Sing these truths as prayers over your church family as you look around. Pray that the truths of our scripture readings will bring encouragement to specific people as you look around the room.

[38 : 23] Do this for them, Lord. Please sink this truth into their hearts. That's why I'm praising you. That's why I'm reaching out to you. Be encouraged as you look and you see community group members that you know are struggling to fight for faith.

And they're lifting their hands up to their king. Be bolstered in your heart by watching others. It's a joy. It's glorious. This is the kind of meditative, prayerful engagement that I'm talking about.

It guards us from passivity. And it unifies our praises. He is our king. So Trinity Grace Church, if you've been a three-strike sinner with no hope, then may this be yet another Babe Ruth moment. Our king has made a way when there was no way. He loves us and was raised up for us. So let's respond to this truth.

Praise the king over all the earth with all that we've got for all that he's done. Let's pray to this king. Oh Lord, we are humbled to be able to come before you.

[39 : 43] Three-strike sinners, unworthy to be in your presence, and yet you've done something glorious to take our place, to purchase us back from sin and from death, so that we can have life with you for all eternity.

Help us to rightly see, to rightly feel, and to rightly respond to these things. And when we don't feel it, Lord, help us to meditate on the truth. What is true?

Not what I feel. What is true? And may we give you all the glory and the praise. We pray these things in the mighty name of King Jesus. Amen. You've been listening to a message at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens.

For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at trinitygraceathens.com.