

# The Song of the Sword

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Join Psalm chapter number 149. You'll see that it's our second and last psalm together. Psalm 150 ends our book together, the book of Psalms. I like having the kids in here tonight.

I know they miss Juana. Juana's a lot of fun. But I'm glad to see you in here tonight, see all the kids. Are there any kids in here? If you're a kid, would you raise your hand? Okay. Josh, Chris, please raise your hand back there if you will.

Thank you. If you don't know why I'm counting Josh as a kid, just check out his socks before you leave, okay? I have mixed emotions about being a picture on people's socks, you know? Partly flattered, partly confused.

They were a nice pair of socks, all right? But I'm glad to have all the kids, including Josh, Chris, here with us tonight. For Psalm 149, we're going to leave off Psalm 150 until a week in February.

And like the second Sunday in February, the whole day, the morning and the evening, is going to be given to the theme of truth-filled music, which is important to us as a church.

[ 0 : 5 9 ] A core value is something that we make sure that we emphasize. And that night, we'll look at Psalm 150, and if you'll read through it, you'll see that there's a big emphasis on it. Yesterday, a few of us got to be with the Holt family for the memorial service of Dr. Sexton at Temple Baptist Church.

And one of the things I was reminded of was how much I learned through the music at that church and the songs that they sung. And as Dr. Sexton would say, a sound pattern of speech, saying the same thing every time until you couldn't forget it.

And the songs that were sung, music is very powerful when it comes to teaching what we know. So I like the song that we just sung, we just heard there. It's one of my favorite Christmas songs.

I love that. And there's been songs written by every tongue and every generation that honor the Lord. And a lot of what we know about the doctrines of the Bible came to us by music.

So that day, we'll focus on that, and we'll get to Psalm 150. But tonight, we're looking at this psalm that John Phillips calls the Song of the Sword. And you may not understand why until we get to the last couple verses of it.

[ 2 : 0 7 ] But it's anticipating the second coming of the Lord. This psalm does a time of victory. It's kind of unique. At the end of this psalm, we're given a reason to praise the Lord. And all the psalms were told at the beginning, praise the Lord.

We're told how to do it. And they were often given, not all the psalms, but in the section, they were given reasons to praise the Lord. This one's unique. And the reason that we should praise the Lord has to do with a future victory that's going to come.

We don't know the setting for this psalm, where the victory that they are receiving. Maybe they've come out of exile. Maybe it's during the times of Nehemiah. But I'm most concerned about is where this would be placed in your life.

Sometimes the hope, well, I shouldn't say sometimes, always the greatest hope that we have is going to be found in the ultimate victory that Jesus brings and sets everything in order.

I tried to sign with a friend today. And we knew that one day Jesus will come and he will set all things in order. That brings hope to us. Joy to the world, as we've said, is a Christmas carol that points to that.

[ 3 : 10 ] And this is a song where we're singing about God's advent in the future. The word advent just simply means the arrival of a notable person, thing, or event. Our family, for the first time, has an advent calendars, some of the weirdest ones I've ever seen.

Carson's is fishing lures, all right? And so every day leading up to Christmas, he opens up a little box and it has some kind of weird fishing lure as we're counting down to it. But just that anticipation of the arrival of the day of Christmas and event.

And this talks about the advent of Christ's return. So three divisions. A command to worship, we'll see in the first three verses. And then the reasons for God's delight, his deliverance. And then the unexpected way that we can worship, which is participating in the judgment of God's enemies, verses 5 through 9.

So we've talked enough about the psalm. Now we'll let God speak through his word. Let God speak through his word. And this is a reading of God's holy inspired word for us tonight. Psalm 149, all nine verses.

Praise ye the Lord, sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him.

[ 4 : 20 ] Let the children of Zion be joyful in their king. Let them praise his name in the dance. Let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.

And some of you are thinking, I bet he skips over that verse. We won't skip over that verse. We will go right through it, okay? Verse 4. For the Lord take the pleasure in his people. He will beautify the meek with salvation.

I love that expression. Let the saints be joyful in glory. Let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand to execute vengeance upon the heathen and punishments upon the people to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron to execute upon them the judgment written.

For this honor have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord. I'm so grateful that you're here tonight. We gather around God's word and we want to respond to it. I said it just a couple weeks ago.

The idea that we would just study a psalm would seem to be foreign to the original writers because we should be experiencing it. We should be praising the Lord. That's what we're being called to do. We're not being called just to study these words.

[ 5 : 29 ] We're being called to praise the Lord. And that's what we should do tonight from our response to what we learned about him. Let's pray.

Then we'll get into this psalm. Heavenly Father, thank you for the truth that I have already heard sung tonight, that you've come for us. Born in a manger, took on the form of a servant, came to a place, Lord, where you could live a life and be tested and tempted in all ways than that we were and passing every one of those tests, living a perfect life but dying upon a cross for me and my brothers and sisters who are in this room.

And Lord, we say it's wonderful. And we thank you for it. And we praise your name. Father, from the youngest in here to the oldest, I pray that they understand your word and they respond to it in a way that would bring you glory and honor.

Lord, at a time where so many people, including us, could be thinking about what is for us, what people are getting for us, tonight, Lord, we set aside this time to give you what you deserve, which is the glory that is due unto your name.

We praise you and we thank you for all that you've done in our lives. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. That expression, verse number four, says, he will beautify the meek with salvation.

[ 6 : 49 ] And so let us praise the Lord as a delivered people. We should praise the Lord for the deliverance that he has given us. And so nothing brings beauty in our lives more than deliverance.

The verse here is saying it will beautify the meek. We are the meek. We are the ones, the meek will inherit eternal life in the New Testament, the Sermon on the Mount. Those that have humbled themselves come to Jesus knowing that they are a sinner.

And then we have been delivered. I went into a store the other day and I would recommend not doing it, men. All right. It's Ulta. U-L-T-A. All right, Brother John, stay clear of this.

You would not do very good in there. All right. It's just all kinds of, like men, you know, you've probably heard this said before, but like men, we have like five-in-one products, hair shampoo, hair conditioner, degreaser.

Like it's all five-in-one. All right. One bottle, five different things. But women have stuff like for their left elbow on a Tuesday afternoon. All right. Like a cream specifically just for that.

[ 7 : 49 ] All right. And so there's just all these things with such an appeal to this will make you look beautiful. This will beautify you. And I say here tonight that nothing will beautify us better than deliverance.

God demonstrated his delight in his people through deliverance from an earthly enemy. And how much more shall we be people that are praising him for our deliverance?

Romans 8.32. He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? It's an implication of the gospel.

When you're going through something in life and you wonder how God feels towards you, and then you're reminded that the God of heaven that delivered you by delivering his son to the cross, why would he withhold any good thing from you?

And so it looks good on you. It's fitting. It's becoming of a Christian, the fact that we live out the fact that we are delivered people, that we're not in bondage. And so he will beautify the meek with salvation or with deliverance.

[ 8 : 53 ] The joy of being delivered is expressed in verse number 5. It talks about being at home. It says, Let the saints be joyful in glory. Let them sing aloud upon their beds.

And so this isn't the teenagers on Christmas break, you know, sleeping in till noon. All right? Let's not do that, all right? Get up at least by 11.30. Have some decency, some respect about yourself, all right?

But this isn't singing, this laying in bed and singing along with the radio. But we're here at a festival, and it talks about being at home. They're at a place here where they're at rest.

You don't get to do this. You don't get to be at a festival, laying upon your beds, having meals. As we saw through the New Testament, when they would eat together, they would be reclined. And it speaks about a position where they're not at war.

They're at a time of peace. They're at a time of rest. And they've come home for that. Tim Cockett was a member here for a couple years. And now he doesn't get to come home.

[ 9 : 49 ] He's in the Navy. And I think about that. I think about how much his family wants him to come home for Christmas. And he would get to recline and sing and be at rest with them. And there's a rest that's found that only God can give.

That's what we're praising him in. The God that gave us deliverance is the one that's giving us rest. He has delivered us. And let's praise his name. Let's live as delivered people that have been receiving the rest that God gives us.

And so we praise the Lord knowing it's pleasing unto him. That's a motivation in our praising to him. He wants praise and he shall receive it. And he tells us to sing a new song in verse number one.

Praise the Lord, sing unto the Lord a new song and his praise in the congregation of the saints. Nearly a dozen times you're going to find almost that verse in the Bible. Almost just like that. We're called upon to sing a new song upon a new occasion of deliverance.

Giving new testimony for what God has done. Now just praising the Lord for his salvation testimony 20 years ago. But something God's been doing in our lives now.

[ 10 : 49 ] In this deliverance he calls us, he calls Israel here their maker. So he asks for praise. He's deserving of praise. And one of the reasons he's deserving of praise in verse number two is it says, Let Israel rejoice in him that made him and him being Israel there.

And the children of Zion be joyful in their king. So it's a call to worship because God formed them as a people. And we could pause there for a moment. And we could consider that there's people overseas and that there's people with inside of our borders that would not acknowledge that the people of Israel are a sovereign nation.

And they would call for their destruction. And here God is saying, I've made you as a people and you shall rejoice in it. Jeff Bush, we have outsourced the education of snakes in my family to Jeff Bush and his family.

All right. Anything Carson knows about snakes other than they're bad and get away from them. He has learned from Jeff and Hudson. All right. He has taught him. And so Carson likes to identify snakes.

And it's amazing when you want to find snakes, you can. All right. You ever heard there's always like in Georgia in the summer, you're always like 15 feet from a snake at any given point. If I really thought that was true, I'd probably move. But I'm just going to pretend like that's not true.

[ 12 : 04 ] The identifying of snakes. And so in a literal sense, Jeff, I thought Carson identifies snakes. But I would like to help him identify the people in his life that are as a snake and combat the lies.

There's a lot of lies out there that are being promoted. And this is not one of them that God's people should be caught up in. Let them rejoice because God made them. The children of Zion should be joyful in their king.

So sing a new song. Not just the children of Israel. That is mentioned three different ways. As made him, the children of Zion, his children. But all of us should be rejoicing in what God has done for us.

It gets down to verse 1 and 2. And it says, The congregation of saints, Israel and the children of Zion, be joyful in their king. And so there's a preaching. The expression, we shouldn't, don't preach to the choir.

Well, I know the choir. They need preaching too, right? And then we not only preach to the choir, but we sing to the congregation. A lot of it's read Psalm 96. It says that we sing unto the Lord a new song and sing unto the Lord all the earth and sing unto the Lord, bless his name, show forth the salvation from day to day.

[ 13 : 13 ] We sing and we give praises to unbelieving people. But here in this psalm and other places, we're told that we need to encourage one another to praise the Lord. That we need to sing in the congregation together.

We encourage other believers to praise the Lord. Then he gets us down to what the posture of prayer would be. In verse number 3, Let them praise his name in dance and let them sing praises unto him with timbrel and harp.

I would like the musicians to come at this time and we're going to do that. All right, no. All right. But let's talk about this here for a moment. Let's have a serious discussion about that application of that verse because I don't want to be disobedient to it.

Regardless, whatever the implications of this verse, we would say that's what we should do. And so I want to look at it for a moment here. We know that we would not want to distract anybody from praising the Lord.

Psalm 115, it would say, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake. That would be the posture of our heart when it comes to praise.

[ 14 : 16 ] We would say, I don't want anybody looking to me. I want to be saying unto the Lord. That's what I'm drawing. I want to draw people's attention to the God of heaven. All right. And so you might assume that the best way you could do that is to stand real still and not move.

That isn't what the Bible would teach us. We would find in the Bible, in the presence of God, as people fell on their face in worship, in Genesis 17 and Nehemiah 8. The presence of God, they raise their hands in worship all throughout the scripture, Psalm, Nehemiah.

In the presence of God, the people bow down in worship, this is seen. And here in the presence of God, even people dance in worship. I like this analogy that was given.

When a president deplanes from Air Force One, servicemen stand in concrete postures of salute at the bottom of the stairs. And does anyone look at the servicemen and say, put your hand down, you're causing a scene?

No, their physical postures do not distract from the president's glory, but it helps display it. That's what's going on there, a reverence. Brother John, I think you may be the only one in here that remember it.

[ 15 : 19 ] And I don't remember the gentleman's name, but you probably know exactly who I'm talking about. Big Steve, I think we called him, Ryan's dad. There'd be some times in a service or in a sometime, he was probably 6'4".

He was a big old tall guy. And he would just slowly stand up out of reverence and just stand there. And he was not wanting to draw attention to himself, but he was just saying, this moment deserves honor and respect.

I was helped by it. But I want us to reflect. So there's some examples given of ways that are displayed, that are pleasing to the Lord, and they're not distracting, but they're displaying.

But I want to reflect here upon the context. This is a very special occasion. They're not in temple worship. They're not in tabernacle worship. They're not in private worship or in public worship. But in a very specific national context.

And I'll give you three examples real quick of other times that we see this. In Exodus 20, after they cross the Red Sea, Miriam and the sister of Aaron takes a timbrel in her hand. I guess it's not the same as a tambourine.

[ 16 : 21 ] Look into the music people, okay? Do we know? I'm going to say tambourine because it's easier for me to say. I'm going with Jesus. He's saying, let's go with it, all right? And they're taking a timbrel and imagining a tambourine. And they went around dancing with it and celebrating what had happened for their people.

Another time in Judges 11, there was a deliverance from 22 different cities that they had overcome. And Jephthah passed over to the children of Ammon to fight against them.

And it says in verse 34, with him, with timbrels and with dances. And she was only a child beside her, neither son nor daughter, but dancing here with these tambourines or timbrels.

Then there's another time, men of war coming home from victory. In 1 Samuel chapter number 18, it says, This context here would look a lot like maybe the street, the parades that we would have had in the streets after World War II.

As a nation, they were celebrating what had happened. You know, our worship now often seems confined into a building in the church services.

[ 17 : 40 ] One, that's not to be the case. But two, that is not where it's going to live eternally. The Bible speaks about a time that we will all be gathered together worshipping him. I'll get to that in a moment.

But these expressions of true worship, they do not distract from God's glory, but they display it. So let me give you four different ways that I think are important if we want to display God's glory in times of worship.

First off is to live consistently. That's not found exactly, not found here in this psalm, but it's just found throughout the Bible. To live consistently here. This goes beyond even what is happening in the service, but the way that we live our lives are consistently pointing people to the worthiness of God.

I worked at a camp, and I won't name it. It's not the one you're thinking of, all right? But I worked at a camp one summer, and it started off, and I was just like loving these times together where we would worship the Lord.

But as the camp went on, the kids just got in more and more trouble. And the more and more they did, the less and less I enjoyed our times of worship together because there was just a hypocrisy about it that they weren't living it.

[ 18 : 43 ] And so even though the song was the same and the performance, you might have thought, was the same, I wasn't able to worship because there was an inconsistency in the life of the people around me that really robbed me from being able to think I'm worshipping here with these people.

And that shouldn't be the case. That was something that they were guilty of. This is a strong statement, but it's still true. There's an awareness that my attitude can cause a distraction from my family and from others being able to give praise.

My family could be limited in their ability to enjoy gathering with God's people and praising them because of an inconsistency in my life and that they could see that.

And I would not want to be a distraction from the praise of the Lord. We talked about earlier about being a distraction, and I've been to all kinds of different church services. Jason Holt actually took me to one one time when I was in college, unlike anything I'd ever seen before.

And there were some things that were going on that were a distraction that probably shouldn't have been happening here. And you would say, well, I would never want to be that in this direction. Well, good. You're not running the aisles and jumping into the baptistry.

[ 19 : 49 ] So thank you for not doing those types of things. And Jason, I really appreciate it. I know how hard it is for you just to sit there and not do those things. But there's other ways, right?

The way that we treat one another and our consistency in our lives that affects our family and those around. And I don't want to do that. I've done that, but I don't want to do that. Pray sincerely. Matthew chapter number six. Take your alms before men.

They'll be seen of others. That would be wrong. That would be inappropriate. One would be seen there. To present your body as a living sacrifice. Romans 12.1, not just in the worship service, but our lives will be given over Him.

And then recognize there's a day coming when we will not be able to refrain from displaying the praise to the Lord bodily. We will kneel down, not just in heart, but one day you will kneel.

Your knee will bend and you will kneel before the God of heaven in Revelation 2.10 and 11. And this is the day that anticipates. There will be a day that will come where dancing will make complete sense in that moment.

[ 20 : 47 ] There will be great victory in that. It's not to say that's the only time, but there will be no doubt that that would be a time where there is a victory that we are looking forward to in our lives that are coming.

When I moved to Georgia some 20 years ago, a friend of mine had already moved here from Kentucky and the church was starting. So I met with him and I said, you know, where are you going in the church? And he told me and he said, you know, they don't, the doctrine isn't what it should be.

But he said, but when the men in that church sing, it's like they really believe it. And he, and I'm like, I was amazed by that. I'm like, you're really telling me you're willing to set these other things aside because that matters.

But it really does matter. It really matters. Are we a people who sang and that we mean what we, when we sang it, do we sing as we really mean it? And people shouldn't have to make a choice between those two.

You shouldn't have to make a choice between being people who seem to really believe it and people who do believe it or believe properly here. And so someday there'll be a great parade of celebration and victory that we look forward to where Revelation 5, 9, a new song will be sung where they will say, Thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof, for Thou art was slain and has redeemed us to God by the blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation.

[ 22 : 01 ] So we've looked at the blessing and the beauty that is found in God's deliverance. And with our time here at the end, verses 5 through 9, this is why John Phillips called it the song of the sword.

We're not to rely upon our cleverness or wisdom, but upon God's word.

Hebrews 4, 12 speaks to us about the word of God being a two-edged sword that is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of man. God's word is ultimately the judge of man.

John 12, 48, He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words has one that judges him the word that I have spoken. The same shall judge him in the last day. There's a double action revolver that some of you would know about in here that they call the judge.

It just means that it is the final verdict in the matter, that it's implying the word of God is truly here, the judge that executes the two-edged sword and the hand.

[ 23 : 15 ] And so it's foolish for any of us to set ourselves up as a higher critic of God's word. And so God's word is the weapon we will use in our battle with Satan. In the list of Christian armor, it's the only weapon for the attack.

And note all the others they are upon for defense. And when Satan first attacked us in the garden or the human race, his primary goal was to persuade Eve to discard the sword of the spirit, the word of God.

As long as she relied upon what God had said, Satan could move her away from believing in the truth. And so in this passage here, it says that the saints here are going to have the honor to execute judgment.

Jesus is returning, and when he returns, he will not be found in a manger on a silent night, but he will come back, and his words will be as a sword, a sword from his mouth.

And he's coming to rule and reign, and he brings a sword, Revelation 19, 15, a sharp sword. It will smite the nations. And it's not just the Psalms that teach about these Hebrew believers having the honor of execute judgment, as we see in verse 9, but it's not a passing thought or just an expression of poetry.

[ 24 : 21 ] It is a truth. It's a prophecy we hear again in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 6, that saints shall judge the world. And so it's written, verse 9, to execute upon the judgment written, This honor have all the saints, praise ye the Lord.

See, this word here, in which the whole world will be judged, is already written. And every hill is not worth dying on, but the fight for the infallibility of the word of God most certainly is.

It's that this word of God will judge the word of the Lord. The word of the Lord that created the universe in Genesis 1, and the word of God that will judge here. And so it says here, That will execute upon them the judgment that is written.

It is the discerner of thoughts. It's his words. So here's my conclusion for us tonight, before we pray together. And then we'll sing a song, if we will, once I, after I pray tonight.

Our God has won victories for us in the past. He's winning victories for you in the present. And one day he will win a climactic victory in the future. Like how Adrian Rogers says it, What in the world is, what in, what is the world coming to?

[ 25 : 30 ] It is coming to Jesus. To that final victory. And so here in the psalm, they are told, they're celebrating a victory. They're told how to do it. They're told why to do it. And they anticipate an advent, a day when there'll be a final victory that's going to come.

And you should know that. In your life, there's a victory that is going to come. But until that day, we should keep a praise in our mouth and the sword in our hand. It says there, these were people that had praise in their heart, that was being communicated by their mouth, and they were holding on to a two-edged sword.

What a beautiful picture for what we are given to do today in our lives, is to be people that have a praise in our mouth, but we hold on to this sword that will execute judgment upon this world.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, thank you for this psalm. Thank you for what we see here and the reasons to praise you. Lord, I don't know what my brothers and sisters are carrying the night in their lives, and I don't know how far a victory is for them or how long it is before they will have complete freedom from whatever it is that is oppressing them or bothering them.

But Lord, I do know that there's a day coming, a final victory. And Lord, I want to sing unto you a new song. You have done wonderful things in our lives. Even throughout this week, Lord, you've been worthy.

[ 26 : 52 ] Once again, you have proven us that you're worthy of our praise. And so, Lord, as Israel would rejoice in you, the children of Zion, they were joyful through a king, we do as well. And we sing unto you, and we give our whole lives to that.

Lord, you take pleasure in your people, praising you. You have told us that if we praise you, you receive pleasure in that. You ask for it, and you should receive it. And Lord, you say that we are beautified by the deliverance that is brought.

Maybe we'd be, Father, I pray that we would be defined by that. We would not walk around and act as if we're people in bondage, but we'd reckon it to be true that we have been made free. It'd be expressed.

It'd be displayed. Not just in the way that we sing in this building together, but in the way that we would live our lives. Father, the saints should be joyful, and they should sing, knowing that they're at a place of rest.

Lord, may that be true about us. Lord, your name is to be praised. Lord, the two-edged sword in our hand, Lord, we thank you for the word of God that we are given. And someday, Lord, all things will be set straight, and the rules of life and your righteousness have already been written out for us here.

[ 28 : 02 ] And Lord, we have opportunity to hear it, to know it, and to obey it. And Lord, it'll be an honor for the saints, Lord, to be involved in this. Father, we praise your name. In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen.