

## Giving Our Hallelujahs Psalm 150:1-6

There is a disturbing trend in American education these days, but it's not just in academia at all levels where this is happening, it's also occurring in the halls of justice and in the streets across our nation. It is the movement to dismantle our history. It is called revisionist history and it seeks to sanitize any vestige referencing God or Christianity. More than just tearing down statues and changing the names of streets, it's underlying motive is to strip us bare of our founding roots, to make us completely secular.

Take for example the movement to fundamentally change what we believe about Thanksgiving. In an interview with American Family Association, author and historian Dr. Stephen McDowell reminds us of the true story of the first Thanksgiving. He states in the interview that "Revisionist history gives a false picture of these devoted Christians. For example, one elementary public school textbook gives 30 pages to present the story of the Pilgrims without once [making] any reference to religion; thus at the end of [the Pilgrims'] first year, they 'wanted to give thanks for all they had.' But there is no mention it was God they were thanking. Teaching about the Pilgrims without referencing God makes people think that Christianity was not important to them. Among other things, revisionist history is a primary reason for the secularization of America. People are taught our history without mentioning Christianity, or if it is cited, it is often presented in a negative light, when in reality it is the most important influence in the birth, growth, and development of the nation." The first Thanksgiving wasn't just a singular event for the Pilgrims. They set aside regular public days to give thanks to God for His blessings.

A year ago, about two dozen elementary and secondary school teachers met in Washington D.C. to attend a workshop titled Rethinking Thanksgiving in your classrooms. They cast the Pilgrims in a different light by teaching that they burned an Indian village and killed the chief's son of another tribe.

What purpose does Thanksgiving serve if God is not the object of our thanks? Other countries also celebrate a Thanksgiving Day but to whom or for what do they give thanks? Do a google search and you will find articles stating that anywhere from 5-17 other countries also have a day sometime in the year set aside for giving thanks. Reasons given for why they celebrate a day of thanksgiving range from colonial migration to the Americas to the start of a new lunar cycle that welcomes the beginning of the harvest season.

But thanksgiving isn't contingent on a single day or event or even on a particular time of the year. Thanksgiving is to be a regular occurrence. Not the feasting every day on turkey and all the trimmings, but a daily offering of thanks to God for His abundant blessings. According to the Apostle Paul in **I Thessalonians 5:18** we are exhorted to give thanks in all things because it is God's will. The implication is that thanks should occur every day because every day is when all things happen. And that brings us to our text on this Thanksgiving weekend.

### Psalm 150:1-6

Psalm simply means sacred song or hymn. Many of the psalms are songs of praise and thanksgiving. **Psalms 111-112** are songs of praise.

**Psalms 113-118** are praise psalms that families sang the night of the Passover. **Psalms 113-114** were sung at the beginning of the meal and **Psalms 115-118** were then sung at the end of the meal. Picture Jesus along with His disciples singing them at the Passover on the night He was betrayed. When Mark records that after they sung a hymn they went out (**Mark 14:26**) it was most likely these psalms.

**Psalms 120-124** are the songs of ascent or pilgrim songs. They were intended to be sung a cappella as travelers journeyed to Jerusalem to attend one of the religious feasts. They would have been signing these hymns the day of Jesus's triumphal entry as they journeyed into Jerusalem. They're called the songs of ascent because all roads into Jerusalem were uphill. Some scholars suggest that they were

also sung as worshippers ascended the 15 steps to the men's court in the Temple.

**Psalms 135-139** are psalms of thanksgiving. They praise God for His work in nature and history.

**Psalms 144-145** are songs of praise and **Psalms 146-150** are the Hallelujah psalms because each one begins and ends with Hallelujah. Now you might be reading your Bible and see that these psalms end with "praise the Lord." I will explain in a moment.

The climax of all the Psalms and the words that should proceed from our tongue are words of praise. These last psalms are a final call to praise. One author even called it the "finale of the spiritual concert." They are the summation of why we give praise and to whom our praise should be given. **Psalm 150** gives us the who, where, why, and how of our praise. Consider these final Psalms to be a doxology. In some respect, **Psalm 150** is mirrored in the doxology we sing.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.  
Praise Him all creatures here below.  
Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts.  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
Amen.

Something else I want you to see in this psalm are the stages of praise. Picture if you will, a full choir and orchestra. Everyone is poised on stage ready for the conductor to begin. The audience is in eager anticipation as he raises his baton or wand and motions with the wave of his arm to begin the musical piece. The audience hears only a lone voice echoing through the auditorium piercing the silence. A few measures later and more voices are added. With more gestures he invites the full choir to blend their voices in this anthem, finally, instruments are added section by section until all are fully engaged in the score that brings thunderous applause at its conclusion.

Our psalm begins on earth and ascends to include heaven. Musical instruments are added to the voices so that everything and everyone that can be employed in bringing God praise.

As the reader has just read the 149 previous psalms, this is an invitation to join in an anthem of praise to God for all He has done. Consider the highs and lows of the psalms, the tragedies and trials, the many times God has delivered, sustained and strengthened. He has been a constant presence and comfort, a mighty fortress for protection. The previous psalms have revealed to us who God is and what He has done culminating in this crescendo of praise, praise that resonates from our passion for God, and that is where we begin.

## I. THE PASSION OF OUR PRAISE – v. 1

The opening statement, "Praise the Lord", is translated from a single word in the Hebrew. Originally it was not a compound word, but over time that idea has been accepted. The word in the Hebrew is hallelujah. The root word is hallel and simply means praise. In our English dictionary the word praise means to set a price or value on something or to appraise. Additionally, it means to commend the worth of or express approval or admiration or to laud the glory of.

Now when it comes to God, who is above every power and principality, marvelous in His being and wonderful in all His ways, He being infinite and I being finite, am I then in a position to ever be one to fix a price or value on Him?

Progressive Insurance has that name your price tool where I can name a price for my insurance. When it comes to giving God value by which I offer Him praise, I'm not a stock boy at the supermarket putting a little sticker that indicates the value of a product on the shelf. I can't ever put a value on God. He is of inestimable worth the result of which is my praise for who He is and all He has done. Any value I might place on God will always fall woefully short of His worth.

### Romans 11:33-36

I praise Him not because of the value I think He is worth. I praise Him because He is worthy of all praise. His value is beyond measure and therefore I praise Him, as **Romans 11:36** says He is worthy of eternal glory, meaning He gets my praise forever.

**Revelation 5:13** “Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: ‘To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!’”

The closer I walk with God, the greater my passion of praise to Him. I consider Him and express an outpouring of gratitude to Him because He is worthy of all I can give and so much more. When I praise God it is out of adoration for who He is and what He has done. It includes acts of blessing, commending, honoring, thanking, celebrating, and rejoicing. I praise Him because He is worthy of all my praise and much, much more.

If you ever want a lesson in praise, just look at what King David did in **I Chronicles 15 and 16**. But there was a tragedy that occurred before this impassioned praise. It happened in **chapter 13**. David had intended to set up the Tabernacle and bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. That would be the center of worship. They loaded it on a cart and began the trip from Shiloh. The oxen pulling the cart stumbled and Uzzah put out his hand to keep the Ark from tipping over and the Lord struck him dead for touching the Ark. The Ark went no further for several months, resting at the home of Obed-Edom. After several months had passed David realized that they had not followed the instructions God had given Moses on how the Ark was to be transported. That’s when we come to **chapters 15 and 16**. All Israel was assembled to bring the Ark to Jerusalem. He laid out a plan that involved singing and musical instruments. It was to be a joyful time of praise because of all that God had done for them. We are told in **15:14** that the Levites consecrated themselves before they carried the Ark. That means they got themselves ready. It was not just in what they wore, but consecration included the preparation of the heart.

Folks, before we come into the presence of the Lord to give Him our praise, we need to prepare our heart, confess our sin, ask God to renew a right spirit within us. That is the first step of offering

praise that is given to God. If I were to offer you a cup of water, you wouldn’t accept it if the vessel I poured it in to give to you was dirty. Yet, how often do I attempt to give praise to God with a heart that hasn’t first been cleansed of all unrighteousness. Before praise, begin with confession.

As the people of Israel brought the Ark into Jerusalem, David led the way dancing and probably singing as loudly as possible so filled with passion for the Lord. But someone was not as enthusiastic about how he was expressing his praise that day. It was Michal, his wife. The end of **chapter 15** tells us that she despised David in her heart. She became critical of David because he loved God more than her. In **II Samuel 6** he told Michal that he would celebrate with even more abandon in giving God praise. His praise was filled with passion.

In the **I Chronicles 16:8-36**, David gives the reasons he is so filled with praise to God. Consider what he was thankful for and ask if these are included in your praise.

Do we declare His name publicly?

Do we make known what He has done to those around us? Maybe one of the reasons our nation is in such a mess is because God’s people aren’t proclaiming what God has done.

Do we sing praise to Him with passion?

Do we praise Him for all His wonderful acts?

Do we praise Him because He not only remembers His promises, but He keeps them forever?

Do we praise Him every day for His salvation?

Do we declare His glory among the nations and tell of His marvelous deeds?

Do we praise Him because He is great?

Do we praise Him because He is worthy of our praise?

Do we attribute to Lord glory and strength that is due His name because He deserves our praise?

Do we praise Him with an offering?

Do we worship Him in the splendor of His holiness? (**Hymn #3 – Holy, Holy, Holy!**)

Do we praise Him because He reigns supreme in the heavens and the earth?

Do we praise Him because He is good?

Do we praise Him because His love lasts forever?

David's passion for praising of God is evident.

**How passionate are you about giving God the praise He deserves?**

We have already made this inference, but our passage gives us the person to whom our praise should be given.

## II. THE PERSON OF OUR PRAISE – v. 1

Hallelujah opens and closes this psalm. Hallelujah is the highest form of praise we can offer.

Hallel is the word for praise.

Jah is the shortened word for Yahweh or Jehovah.

Hallelujah literally means to praise Yahweh or praise the Lord. Thirteen times in six verses we are told to praise God. He is the sole object of our adoration, the One to whom we direct our praise, the only One who is worthy of all praise.

We are told in **Romans 1:21** that a reason some are steeped in sin is because they fail to glorify God and give Him thanks, so their hearts are darkened in sin.

God is to be the only object of our praise because He deserves it. **Matthew Henry** calls praise “a great and necessary duty, a duty we should be much employed and much enlarged in, but which we are naturally backward to and held to.” He is saying that we are to be greatly engaged in praise, but that we don't praise nearly as often or to the extent we should.

He continues with this thought: “Not that our praise can bear any proportion to God's greatness, for it is infinite, but since He is greater than we can experience or conceive, we must raise our conceptions and expressions to the highest degree we can attain to...all the danger is of saying too little; and therefore, when we have done our utmost, we must own that though we have praised Him in consideration of, yet not in proportion to, His excellent greatness.”

Boiling it down I understand him to mean that the more I know God, the greater will be my passion in offering Him praise, and when I consider who God is as best I can with my finite mind, I will never be able to adequately praise Him, but I should praise

Him the best I can, the best I know how and to do so unreservedly and with passion.

**Psalm 145:3** “Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; His greatness no one can fathom.”

Charles Spurgeon writes in his book The Treasury of David that to give praise to anyone else is “shameful treason and to refuse to render it to God is heartless robbery.”

I am ashamed to admit that many times I fail to give God the praise He deserves, that there are times when I keep praise given to me for something I have said or done and neglected to bestow my praise to the One who made it possible. **How often have I robbed God of His praise?**

John paints for us a picture of enduring and adoring praise before God in his description of what occurs in heaven as the four living creatures and the 24 elders render their praise to Him. Let's set the stage by reading from the beginning of John's vision.

### **Revelation 4:1-11**

I find it appropriate that our hymnal begins with songs of praise to God. It is my humble opinion that we aren't prepared to sing any other song unless we begin first with praise to God. Look at some of the songs that begin our hymnal. They are anthems of praise to God.

**(Read some of the early songs in the Hymnal)**

These hymns are a call to consider who God is and invite us to join in worshipping Him through our praise. A couple of weeks ago we considered the names of God as we see Him in Genesis. Consider His names and give Him praise.

Praise Him that He is the Creator God.

Praise Him that He is the Covenant/relational God.

Praise Him that He is the God who sees.

Praise Him for His mighty power.

Praise Him for His abiding presence.

Praise Him for His provision.

Praise Him for His protection.

Praise Him for His forgiveness, His mercy, His grace, His love.

Praise Him for His attributes.

Praise Him for His unchangeable nature.

How important it is to be passionate about our praise, but more so, how important it is to give all our praise to the Person who deserves it. The psalmist then invites us to consider the place of our praise to God.

### III. THE PLACE OF OUR PRAISE – v. 1

This is an invitation for the followers of God to gather in Jerusalem at the Temple to offer their praise. Some have interpreted this literally to mean the Holy place. The Tabernacle as with the Temple constructed later by Solomon, had an outer court where worshippers came to offer their sacrifices. Within the court was another area that contained the Holy place and the Holy of Holies. A priest could enter the Holy place to put bread on the table each day, keep the lamp lit and the incense burning. But only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies and that only once a year on the Day of Atonement. When the Tabernacle was moved to Jerusalem and then later when the Temple was built, worshippers came to the city offer their sacrifices in worship to God. This psalm is an invitation to meet God in His sanctuary to offer their praise to Him.

We gather each week at this location in a room we call the sanctuary for a time we have reserved where together we offer our praise to God. It is here we lift our voices in adoration to God and of God. Our songs are an offering of praise. Our offering is a time of praise. Our prayer is a time of praise. Our message is an offering of praise as we sit expectantly before the Lord to hear what He has to say to us from His holy Word that will draw us to know Him better. It is an experience that will render to Him even greater praise. How is our praise in the sanctuary?

Some who read the last part of **verse 1** believe that the sanctuary referred to here is heaven itself, the place where He resides on His throne, **“Praise God in His sanctuary, praise Him in His mighty heavens.”**

In the Old Testament, the Tabernacle or the Temple was the place where God resided. It was considered

holy because of His presence. Nothing undefiled could enter it because God was there. Now consider what **I Corinthians 6:19-20** says and ponder something else in regard to the place of our praise. **I Corinthians 6:19-20 “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”**

The Westminster catechism begins with that all important question, the answer to which gives us the reason for our existence.

What is the chief end of man?

To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

What is man’s purpose? To give God praise. Because God indwells the believer through the presence of the Holy Spirit, we are the sanctuary of the living God so we are to praise God in all we do. Our body is a sacred place because God resides there. **I Corinthians 10:31** says that in whatever we do, it should all be done for God’s glory, it should all be done for the purpose of giving God praise.

**Is our life a place through which God receives praise?**

If we are passionate about the person of God as the recipient of our praise, it will be.

Consider then also from Psalm 150 the purpose of our praise.

### IV. THE PURPOSE OF OUR PRAISE – v. 2

The psalmist gives us to reasons to offer God praise.

#### A. Praise Him for His Acts of Power

You don’t have to go very far in the opening verses of Scripture to see God’s power at work. It is evident in the creation. We are told in verses like **John 1:3** and **Hebrews 11:3** that all God did was speak and everything was created from nothing. Genesis is a testament to His mighty power. Daniel shows us His mighty power. The Gospels are a witness of His miraculous power. The very breath you take and the beat of your heart, that you don’t float off into space or that the

universe maintains its course testifies to God's acts of power.

Open up God's dictionary and the word impossible is missing because nothing is impossible with Him.

**What do you see in your life that is an evidence of His acts of power?**

As followers of Christ, believers have so much to thank God when it comes to His acts of power, beginning with the power to save us and give us an eternal home (**Romans 1:16**). Implied in **Romans 8:38-39** is His power because nothing in heaven or on earth can separate you from His love.

But the psalmist gives us something else for which we offer God praise. We praise Him for His almighty preeminence.

## **B. Praise Him for His Almighty Preeminence**

**“Praise Him for His surpassing greatness.”**  
**Psalm 145:3 “Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; His greatness no one can fathom.”**

### **I Chronicles 29:11-12**

He is the King of kings.  
He is the Lord of lords.  
He is the God of gods.

Muhammed Ali once stated that he was the greatest, yet in time, even he was defeated.

Nothing can and no one will surpass His greatness. Therefore, He deserves our praise. That is our purpose.

In **verses 3-5** we see the pieces of our praise.

## **V. THE PIECES OF OUR PRAISE – vs. 3-5**

We learned that David called for these instruments when bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. It's an invitation to use all kinds of musical instruments in our praise – wind, stringed, and percussion. Eight are named. Representing the wind instruments are the trumpet and flute. The stringed instruments include the harp, lyre, and strings. Included with the percussion instruments

are the tambourine, and two types of cymbals – the small and large. It's believed that the small cymbals were like castanets that are worn on the fingers while the larger ones gave the loud clash.

Like singing, musical instruments can sound beautiful but can be just a noisy gong or clanging cymbal when the heart is not in tune with God. Only a heart that is right with God can offer an aroma of praise that He is pleased with.

If you play an instrument, play it with all the gusto you can in praise to God. If all you can do is play the radio, play it and sing your offering of praise to the One who is worthy of all praise.

This psalm speaks of the passion of our praise, the person of our praise, the place of our praise, the purpose of our praise and the pieces of our praise. Let me close with one final thought. **Verse 6** points out the people of praise.

## **VI. THE PEOPLE OF PRAISE – v. 6**

I don't think it's circumstantial that the word for breath here is the same word used in **Genesis 2:7** where God breathed into man the breath of life. We are told that the heavens declare the glory of God. Jesus said that if His followers remained silent the rocks would cry out in praise. But to me this verse seems to mean that only those who have been given the breath of life, to have a consciousness that animals, who also breathe but do not have means to speak in praising God, that we have been given an understanding of who God is and are therefore called to give Him praise. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. We who have the breath of God in us because He has redeemed us are called on to give Him praise. Despite the challenges this past year has brought us, we are called to give our hallelujah. **Spurgeon said that “If men are dull in the worship of the Lord our God they are not acting consistently with the character of their religion.”**

**Psalm 95:1-2 “Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song.”**