



Summer Song

Part 7 – Psalm 150

Pastor Ted Cunningham

We are finishing our *Summer Song* series today in Psalm 150. You are going to see we had Matt do that because all those instruments are in Psalm 150 except the harmonica; I don't think that's in Psalm 150. But Matt proved once again how hard you have to work to make a living in Branson. You have to play a lot of instruments. I was going to do that, but then I didn't. Is he a talented guy or what? He makes this stuff up in his head. The mind of Matt Gumm... Very few of us ever want to go there, but he goes there a lot and comes up with that stuff, so we're very blessed to have Matt.

Today we are going to be talking about Psalm 150. You have no idea how bad I wanted to preach this morning on Daniel and the lion's den, but I held myself back. This service is a little bit more liberal. Okay. The first service thought that was hilarious. I've got a lot of lion jokes, but I'm going to wait a few weeks. I'm going to stand up for the zebra. That's what I've decided to do. Lions have been taking out zebras for years and now we're all worried about the lion.

I have to stop and be done with it. We are at Psalm 150. Have you ever had anyone say "Praise the Lord!" to you? That's one of my mom's favorite expressions. If you are brand new to church, that expression could freak you out. Today we want to talk about what it means to praise the Lord. In Psalm 150, we have a four part outline in six verses. Here is the outline and I love it. It's the where, the why, the how, and the who of praise. Where do we find praise? Where should we praise? The why is probably where we will spend the most time this morning. Why do we praise the Lord? With how, we are going to see that we throw everything we have at praise. Then we will end with the who. Who should be praising?

Praise the Lord everywhere

We are going to jump right in with this very first verse with this big idea. ***1 Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary...*** Maybe you grew up in a church where the word "Sanctuary" was over the door as you walked in. We have all sorts of terms now we see at churches. You'll see "Worship Center." You'll see "Theater." You'll see "Auditorium." Sanctuary means the place on Earth where believers gather to sing praise to God; to give praise to God. In the psalmist's day, it was the Temple in Jerusalem. Today, it's the church.

Let me tell you where it is today. For us, it's in a castle. For some it's in a movie theater. For others, it's in a traditional building with a steeple. For some, it's in a bar. I know friends that have churches that are meeting this morning after much cleaning late last night. They are meeting now in a bar as a church,

using that as a facility. I have a friend that meets in a bowling alley. Some meet in schools. There are some that are meeting in basements. There are some that are meeting in family rooms. There are some that are meeting on the side of a hill.

It's the crescendo of our week when we corporately gather together as individual worshipers to praise the Lord together. The goal of our time here together is to sing praise and give praise back to God. ...**praise him in his mighty heavens.** I like what one writer said. "His glory goes out to the universe; so shall his praise." We are to sing praise and it goes out from this place. That's the where we do it. It's everywhere. It's at all times.

Praise the Lord for who He is and what He has done.

Here's the why, where we are going to spend the time today. Verse 2 is going to explain this. ***2 Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.*** Praise him for what he has created. Praise him for his mighty acts. Praise him for what he has done in your life. This is what I hear often from my mom. When we share good news with her, something that the Lord has done in our life, my mom will simply respond with "Praise the Lord!"

I have just two quick stories to kind of share with you about how in July, our family has been praising the Lord. We were in Philadelphia last week at a family camp. It was actually in Maryland, but I wanted to go up to Philadelphia and do the history tour. Do we have any history buffs in here? You've studied Benjamin Franklin. I studied him, but I didn't know how brilliant he was and he made me feel quite lazy. The man has done pretty much everything, and he built the City of Philadelphia.

We went to the Franklin Institute and I found out there is a planetarium inside. I told Amy we had to take the kids to the planetarium. I grew up in Chicago where we had one that was awesome. So we went to the Solar System show. It was incredible. I figured they would just press play... How many of you have been to a planetarium? I thought they were going to press play and there would be some narration. Not at this one. It was live. We had a scientist and he was the biggest geek on the planet. We're all geeks at something. Some of you are geeks about fishing and hunting and lion killing and others of you are... See, I can't help but throw it in. *Stop it. Save it. Wait. People are too sensitive.* But some of you are geeks about NASCAR. Some of you are geeks about guns. This guy was a geek about the Solar System. He was passionate. For 45 minutes, he was spinning things around and he would zoom a planet in and now we're going to Saturn and now we're going to Earth. Those were the primary two we focused on. I was exhausted and I slept through about 20 minutes, but still, he was passionate nonetheless. This guy was passionate and our kids were on the edge of their seats. There was a 360 degree view.

He's speaking of the heavens. He's speaking of creation. My son is the apologetics expert in our family and this guy knew his stuff. He had some of his facts wrong and any time he would share... My son reacts any time someone says the earth is billions of years old. He goes after them; it just wears him out. But this guy is sharing and I'm thinking to myself *This would be one of the greatest evangelistic crusades ever if this guy understood who created it all.* I love when they get excited. I don't know, maybe this guy has done this a thousand times. He had the script down, but he deviated from the script

and got excited. I'm thinking *I believe in an intelligent design and this is amazing. You, my friend, are amazed by this. Let me introduce you to the one who created the whole thing. That makes the story even better. All of this greatness and you're not giving attribution to the one who, as the Psalms declare... This is God's finger work. This is his handiwork.*

As we walked out, I asked the kids what they thought. They said, "Apart from the bad information we got, we learned a lot."

Something happens inside when you realize who you are in the midst of all that God created. We looked at this in Psalm 139. He created you. He created you in the midst of all the universe. If you've ever seen a birth... Most of us in here have seen at least one birth. I was present for two and it's amazing. Apart from all the screaming, this is a miracle that God designed it to work this way. He's the creator of this. He is the sustainer of this.

We've been holding life precious this month. Amy and I were out of town for a couple of days at the beginning of July when I got the phone call from my dad. He said "Ted, we just want you to know everybody is okay. Your mom and Carson were involved in a head-on car collision. Airbags deployed and all that. They were taken by ambulance to Cox. They are here now, I'm with them, and everything is fine."

He got Carson on the phone. He was in the backseat with the seatbelt on and looking down. Both cars were probably going 35 miles per hour when they hit. Carson was in shock. He got out of the car and started roaming the highway. My mom's glasses flew out. A guy who sees it stops and he won't let my mom out of the car. She's freaking out because she can't find Carson. She wants to get out of the car. Carson does the perfect impersonation of this guy. I asked him what the guy was doing. "Well, the guy kept looking at Pomma and saying 'Ma'am, just sit down. Sit down. Stay seated.'" I thought *I didn't know Jim Brawner was there*. The guy got Carson and brought him to my mom so she could see he was okay.

I asked Carson if he cried or got emotional. He's exhausted with people asking him about the accident. He doesn't want to talk about it anymore. I asked how Pomma was doing. "Well, she kind of had a little emotional breakdown at the scene and here." He had a bruise from the seatbelt, but we've been to the doctor and the chiropractor and he's getting everything fixed. He's okay. He finally said "Can we stop talking about this thing."

About a week goes by and we haven't talked about it a whole bunch because he doesn't want to talk about it. We were going to the C of O Basketball Camp. Amy got his outfit and he got dressed. We're in the car and he got a hamburger. I still don't know what kids are thinking when they pile on the ketchup on the top of a burger and then they put the bun on and squeeze it together. There are only so many condiments that can fit on the top of a burger before it comes out the other side. He put it on then he held it up to take a bite and it squirted out the other side and landed on his shirt. I don't know at what age they figure this out. Some of the ladies are going "My husband is 52 and he hasn't figured that out."

But he got a spot on his shirt and he said "Oh, Mom, sorry about that."

She goes "Carson."

He goes "I have it taken care of." And because 10 year olds are supper smart, he grabbed a napkin and started wiping it off and rubbing it in. Now the spot is this big circle on the front of his basketball jersey. How many moms does this drive crazy? It's okay to say this drives you crazy. They should learn at some point. They're going to be dating at some point and wanting to get a woman and you can't do that with ketchup and stuff all over you.

So we got there and Amy got the wipes out. How many of you ladies carry wet wipes in your purse? You've got problems. Let him be a boy; he'll learn eventually. Anyway, she got a wipe out and she wanted to clean him up before he went into the camp.

He's like "Mom, I'm fine." Again, there is an age when you stop using wipes on your children. And he's got friends and he's going into a basketball camp, and to be sitting there getting cleaned up by his mom is embarrassing. He says no and then I have to step in as dad. At what point do I put the hammer down and be like "Get over here, you're mother gave a direct order and you're going to obey it." The second time she asks, he says no. She finally walks over and grabs him by the arm and pulls him over.

He goes "MOM! Be careful; I was just in an accident." He's using that now for the whole month. "I'm fragile. Everybody be careful."

When we think about creation and we think about the greatness of God... Look at what Verse 2 says ***2 Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.*** Praise is an expression of thankfulness. It's an expression of remembrance. When you think about what God has done, when you ponder what he has created in the universe, in the cosmos and in your life, as you think about the Lord's work in your life, we are called to praise.

This week, I've spent a lot of time, obviously, in the universe and in the Solar System and the Galaxy. And this story kept coming to my mind. For many of you, you can get there. Maybe some of you in here were not born at this point. I want to take you back to 2003. We remember February 1, 2003, when we got the news that the Space Shuttle Columbia had broken apart over Texas and Louisiana. As a nation, we've had moments like this where we mourn together.

Yesterday, I read the transcript between Mission Control and the Space Shuttle with all the checks. Most of it was technical and I couldn't understand over half of it, but the back and forth between Mission Control and the Space Shuttle as they were bringing the shuttle in and that moment when the last word is spoken from the Space Shuttle... You can then tell the desperation as they are trying to figure out what had happened.

It was January 16th that the Space Shuttle Columbia took off. In this whole story, there is just a beautiful picture of the greatness of God that a lot of people didn't hear; it wasn't on the news. But this shuttle and this mission was led by Commander Rick Husband. Rick was a passionate follower of Jesus Christ. He was the leader on this mission and he did something that the suit technician – the guy who gets them

ready before they walk out of the door and go down and wave to the press and to family one last time before they go onto the shuttle... This suit technician said "I've never seen another commander do this, but before they opened that door, Rick Husband turned around and spoke a blessing over the crew." He prayed with and for the crew. They walked out and waved good-bye to their family and to the press and to us as a nation.

They got onto the shuttle and Mission Control says "It's a beautiful day for a launch."

Rick Husband responded with "The Lord has given us this perfect day." Everything coming out of his mouth was bringing praise to the Lord.

There is a tradition at NASA where they allow the spouses of the crew to pick a song. They can pick one song during the mission at some point to wake the crew up to. The song that Rick Husband's wife chose was a song by Steve Green called *God of Wonders*. So this song wakes them up on one of the days of their mission and Mission Control says "Good Morning, that song is God of Wonders by Steve Green."

As you think about this next picture, I want to quote exactly what Rick said in response to Mission Control. He said "Good Morning, thank you. We can really appreciate the lyrics of that song up here. We look out the window and we see that God truly is a God of wonders." What he was able to see and what he was able to experience...

The night of February 1st, Steve Green, who is a very good friend of Rick Husband's... After he got the news, he still had a concert to do 12 hours later. He shared all this story that I'm sharing with you to those in attendance that night. I think this is the most powerful part of the story for me. This is a picture of Rick Husband's family. The son was about five at this time and the daughter was ten. It was a seventeen day mission. Before he left, he filmed 34 videos and he filmed 34 devotionals for his kids; 17 for his son and 17 for his daughter. He wanted them to know the greatness of God.

Dan spoke about this so well last week. This is our story. This is our song. This is what we declare and there are three very simple parts. Rick passed this on to his children. First of all, we know. We've been receiving from parents and from generations of past. We know, we see, and we experience. And all of this goes into our children as we pass on the greatness. Dan talked about this so well last week. We know; it's been passed on to us and now it's our turn to pass it on. We can look out into the heavens and see the works of God. This is why in the Nation of Israel...It says in Deuteronomy 6 that one day your child is going to ask why we obey all these laws and stipulations? Why do we do this? It's at that moment a father is explaining God's deliverance of his people out of bondage into the Promised Land. It's at that moment you explain to them the greatness of God. In your salvation, you've experienced that God is good, God is great.

So let me ask you to fill in this blank. "When I ponder the greatness of God, it makes me want to _____." Is it dance, cry, sing, whistle, make music, praise the Lord? There's a video I want to show you that kind of ties all of this together. It's by Chris Rice and it's Hallelujah's. It brings creation and my place and your place in creation all together.

*A purple sky to close the day
I wade the surf where dolphins play
The taste of salt, the dance of waves
And my soul wells up with hallelujahs*

*A lightning flash, my pounding heart
A breaching whale, a shooting star
Give testimony that you are
And my soul wells up with hallelujahs*

*Oh, praise Him, all His mighty works
There is no language where you can't be heard
Your song goes out to all the Earth
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah*

*Oh, cratered moon and sparrow's wings
Oh, thunder's boom and Saturn's rings
Unveil our Father as you sing
And my soul wells up with hallelujahs*

*Oh, praise Him, all His mighty works
There is no language where you can't be heard
Your song goes out to all the Earth
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah*

*The pulse of life within my wrist
A fallen snow, a rising mist
There is no higher praise than this
And my soul wells up, oh, my soul wells up
Yes, my soul wells up with hallelujahs*

*Oh, praise Him, all His mighty works
There is no language where you can't be heard
Your song goes out to all the Earth
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah
Oh, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah*

That's worth an amen. Let's look at the last part of the text.

We praise the Lord with music.

Look at this text. If you are from the Church of Christ background, this text is going to wear you out.

3 Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, 4 praise him with timbrel and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe,(for my Baptist friends) 5 praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.

Do you know what this is saying? It's saying throw everything you've got at praise. I love when people critique the rock concert at Woodland Hills Family Church. "It's too much." "You shouldn't do it." Well let me tell you; it ain't stopping any time soon. We're not changing the volume either. I love when Kevin steps out on the strings and really plays it; I'm going "Yes!! Go for it!" We're going to give it everything we've got. We are to throw it all at praise and hold nothing back, reserve nothing.

I think about my Branson entertainer friends. If you are in show business at all, I applaud you for just the ability to do the same show six, seven, eight, nine times a week all week. I've been at the show where you can tell this person is exhausted. There is no life coming from them. Maybe I'm going into a bad territory right now, but I think this is important to say. You wonder where you will get the energy for it. You've done the same song 4,000 times. You see it coming out when you're watching it.

What do you do there? You give it everything you've got because you were gifted with that voice. Your ability to play an instrument... You were gifted with that. You go out every time... I don't care if you have five people in the audience; you get the hair standing up on the back of their necks. You blast them out of there with everything because you are praising the Lord with what he has given you. You give 110%. The reaction or the lack thereof from your audience is not what determines what you give. Every time you step on stage, you are returning praise to the Lord. You are reminding yourself that this was given to you, so you are going to offer it back. "This is a praise offering. I'm going to bless others with how God has blessed me."

So let's look at some bigger ideas of music. Music stirs us. We were at the camp this week and there was a lady that has her PHD in the fiddle. She called it the violin, but it was a fiddle. She got her PHD in it. Now I don't go to a lot of symphonies. I don't go listen to one person play; it's not something I look for or seek out, but when she started to play... There were a lot of rednecks in the room like me. It was amazing. She was fully into it. She was moving back and forth. We all just sat there with our jaw dropped. We wondered where that music was coming from. It was just her.

You've been there when the music stirs you. Do you have a song that stirs you? You hear it and there is something about the way that song goes... there are songs I can't get out of my brain like *The Devil went down to Georgia*. I have every word of that song memorized. I'm trying to find a way to redeem it and bring it up here more than just substituting "son of a gun." I want to make it a spiritual song because when those two violins get going back and forth, it's amazing.

Amy has a song. Do you know what her song is? It's good. I know if I ever want to romance my wife, I have a go to song and it stirs her. We do listen to a lot of country in the house, but all I have to do is

press play on my iPhone to this one song. I can't impersonate this guy well at all, but you'll get it when I start singing it. *"Now I had the time of my life. No I never felt this way before. Yes I swear it's the truth and I owe it all to you."* I change keys and do whatever I want with that song. But what it does to Amy... When she hears it, we're back in the 1980s.

For some of you it's the song *Faithfully*. When you hear Chicago, you're there. For some of you it's *"A guy walks into a bar, orders a drink, sees a girl that catches his eye..."* I shouldn't have that song memorized. But this is the power of music and it's why the Psalms... Psalm 150 is the crescendo of all we have in the Psalms. The last five Psalms are bringing praise to the Lord. Make it big. Make it loud. Give it everything you've got.

Music stirs, but it also sticks with us. Our kids have been learning world history through a song called *The Timeline Song*. We play it in the car. If I hear the song one more time, I'm going to punch myself in the face. This song is wearing me out, but I've got world history down. Through elementary and high school and college and masters, I learned a little bit of history, but with this song, I've got it. I can't get it out of my brain. I know how it all fits together from this song because songs stick with us.

Let me just ask my senior friends in here a little bit. When we sang those first three hymns this morning, those are songs you catch yourself singing as you drive down the road, aren't they? I do. I sing hymns. I'll be driving down the road singing and I'll be like *where did that one come from. I haven't thought about that song for 20 years* and it pops back into my brain. Some of them that have come back to me recently are *"Love lifted me, love lifted me."* My kids are like "What are you singing?" It sticks with you.

I'll never forget the story I shared a couple of Easters ago. Lee Strobel was a journalist at the Chicago Tribune and an atheist. His wife, a passionate follower of Jesus, started attending Willow Creek outside of Chicago. Lee wanted nothing to do with it. Finally, after invite after invite, he starts going a time or two to church with her. He catches himself... I love this. This is the power of music. He catches himself singing these songs from church in the shower. He thinks to himself *I don't even believe this stuff. Why am I singing it?* Music sticks with us.

Music reminds us.

Now how about this? This is the emotional linkage behind music. Music takes us back to a place. I think about all the songs that have stuck with me. Again, I know I listen to country, but I think about all the songs that take me back to 9/11. Darryl Worley came out with the song *Have You Forgotten*. When I hear that song, all the images of that day and where I was and what I saw on television come back to me. When Alan Jackson sang *Where Were You When the World Stopped Turning*, I go back. Does anybody else? You go back to these moments where you were.

I can remember Toby Keith came under fire for *Courtesy of the Red White and Blue*. People were outraged because it was such an angry song. But that's music. Music is emotional. After we came out of mourning after 9/11, many of us had to deal with anger for a long time. I did. There were moments after 9/11 that Christ-likeness was not... I had moments when they would come on the news, telling us what was going on and I was like *Blow them off the face of the map*. This was emotional.

But when I hear those songs... Don't leave me up here hanging, please. You go back emotionally; you are there. This is why our praise is everything we've got. This is why music plays such an important role in our praise to the Lord. To those of you who think you can't sing, it doesn't matter; belt it out.

How many of you grew up with a singing mom or a singing grandma? You hear those songs and you go back to your mom. I do. My mom sang. Dad didn't sing much, but mom sang the hymns and I knew them. How many of you your mom couldn't sing? It didn't matter. We didn't care. This is the power of music and praise. This is why I encourage you to make sure your phone has worship. Make sure whatever device you have, you are filling your heart and soul with praise to the Lord, returning it to him.

Praise the Lord everyone.

This is the last part. It's the who. Who is to be offering the praise? Scripture is clear. Verse 6 ends the whole series, the whole book. ***6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.***

Father, it is in the name of Jesus that we thank you for this series. We thank you for this summer. It's been a good summer and we're grateful for the tour through Psalms. Today, we end it by returning praise to you. We seek to bless you, we seek to honor you, we esteem you as highly valuable. Your greatness throughout the universe, throughout the stars, the Earth, and in our lives, we recognize your greatness and we are grateful for it and we return it to you with praise.

We thank you for what you will do as we enter into the school year, and with all that has to go before us, we simply say "Praise the Lord" and it is in the name of Jesus that everyone agreed and said... Amen.