

Jan. 08, 2017

Lesson 6

All Creation Overflows with Praise

**Context:**

The scripture lesson today focuses on creation and its relationship with God. Our psalmist masterfully paints a picture of humans and the earth coming together to sing and praise God for all the wonders that are found around them. The beginning verses speak of singing about the greatness of God who is worthy of praise. Because of the fact that God has created everything, there is to be praise and rejoicing that the Lord's fingerprints are on everything on earth. There is the celebration that because the Lord has created the earth, we will see the Lord will also establish justice and make things right on the earth.

It is a Psalm that focuses on praise as the greatest thing that can be done to honor the Lord. And the Lord comes to dwell in the midst of it all. All creation is to sing out in praise of God, the one who created everything.

**Application:**

This psalm has several points that should stand out to us about how God works in our lives and all is all around us.

The first comes from the gratitude that we hear in the opening lines that the psalmist mentions. There is the instruction to sing to the Lord a new song. Each day we are to see that God is at work around us and every day is an opportunity to receive or see that work being done. Every day is a gift from God. Sure, there are days that may be rougher or days where we feel overwhelmed. But there are also a lot of things that go well and have the Lord's fingerprints on them. One of things that I have tried to work on is having a gratitude journal, a journal where I reflect and give thanks to God about something special that happened during the day. Sometimes it is an epiphany moment where something clicked in my mind or an event, word, or person that gave me a glimpse of God working in my life. The practice reminds me to give thanks that the Lord is at work in my life every day.

The second point that stands out is the speaking of the Lord as the most awesome of all because the gods of the nations are all idols. While the psalmist was talking about foreign deity statutes like Asherah or Baal that were prominent in that time, the words also speak to today. There are plenty of idols that stand prominently in our world. Bishop Pennel, one of my professors at Vanderbilt Divinity School, used to say that the idols he saw even lurking in the Christian church were wealth, success, prestige, and power. Those idols, if we do not watch them closely, can take over our lives and take away from us seeing the Lord at work and participating in that work. We worship them and forget to see that the Lord is the only God and has also called us to follow in ways and practices that do good in the world. As in the final verses we hear that everyone is to rejoice that the Lord is coming because the Lord will establish justice on earth and treat all people fairly. For us that means following Jesus for how we treat others especially those who are poor, marginalized, and victims of oppression. The Lord is coming and the Lord will judge all those who do not follow the model that we know Christ set for us.

The third point that stands out is the grandeur of the Lord that we especially see in nature and makes us realize that God is in all sorts of holy places. Verse six talks about strength and beauty found in his sanctuary. I think it speaks to the fact that we should experience worship in all sorts of places. For Sunday mornings, we experience through corporate worship as we sing old hymns written before our time, join in affirmations of faith like the Apostles' Creed, receive Holy Communion, and hear the Word proclaimed in the hear and now. Worship is meant to be a formal experience, one in which we are reminded that the Lord speaks into our daily humdrum life. But I have also come to find that we can experience worship in nature as well. One of my favorite things to do is go outdoors to hike and observe nature. There I see God's handiwork and when the wind blows and stirs the leaves in the tree or a bird sings, I remember that I am also in a different sanctuary that belongs to the Lord. This one too has places for singing and rejoicing that the Lord is the great Creator.