

Psalm 149 – Praise to God for His salvation and judgement

I think it is important for every Christian to recognise that what we do as a Christian must flow out of our worship relationship with God. I remember a wonderful preacher Dr. Alan Fleece saying “we must never forget that we are first worshippers then workers”. First we need to have a vital deep love relationship with God and then out of that grows an effective service for God. So in this Psalm the writer gives us four things we should do in worship. Again it comes to us in the context of this great finale in the Psalms which is really a wonderful ongoing crescendo of praise to the wonderful God that we know, love and worship.

Worship the Lord intelligently v1-2. Worship is something we learn and keep learning to do. Sadly for many, worship never really gets beyond a rather shallow, repetitive ritualistic operation. I think it would be fair to say that for many Christians their worship of God never really gets beyond the routine and ritual nature of Sunday morning as usual. It's never God's desire that that should

PRAISE the Lord for:

- The many opportunities Carl had to visit and talk to pastors and leaders of churches around Victoria regarding the use of Challenge paper for evangelism
- The various gifts we have received towards the ongoing supply of much needed Bibles for new believers in prisons throughout South Africa
- His amazing faithfulness. As we look back and reflect on God's journey for Challenge we marvel at where we are at today

happen, but unfortunately depending on where we are at in our love relationship with God obviously impacts how we are growing and developing in our worship

of God. So therefore we need to see that our primary focus of worship should always be God. The opening verse says “Sing to the Lord a new song.” It is very important for us to acknowledge that we are born to worship but if we don't worship the living God we will worship something else. Then we need to recognise that worship of God is not some sort of mindless act but a clear and direct action so that we make a progression as we worship God. Then we worship Him for the beauty of His creation and we worship and thank Him for the blessings that He pours out upon us day by day. When I first became a Christian one of the first things that really seemed to take on a whole new look for me was God's creation. It seemed that the sky was bluer; the grass was greener; the

PSALM 149

- 1 Praise the Lord!
Sing to the Lord a new song,
And His praise in the
assembly of saints.
- 2 Let Israel rejoice in their Maker;
Let the children of Zion
be joyful in their King.
- 3 Let them praise His name
with the dance;
Let them sing praises to Him
with the timbrel and harp.
- 4 For the Lord takes pleasure
in His people;
He will beautify the
humble with salvation.
- 5 Let the saints be joyful in glory;
Let them sing aloud on their beds.
- 6 Let the high praises of
God be in their mouth,
And a two-edged sword
in their hand,
- 7 To execute vengeance
on the nations,
And punishments on the peoples;
- 8 To bind their kings with chains,
And their nobles with
fetters of iron;
- 9 To execute on them the
written judgment
This honor have all His saints.
Praise the Lord!

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OVER**

trees seemed more beautiful and the birds seemed to have the most exquisite colours. I really believe that part of the reason for the change was that suddenly I was looking at God's creation through God's heart as He indwells us through His spirit. Secondly worship needs to be seen both as a corporate and individual joy and privilege. As the Psalmist says *"let Israel rejoice in their maker, let Zion be joyful in their King."* This really highlights for us that when it comes to worship it is God's desire that we not only worship Him as a church but that ideally we would worship Him as a nation. I think that is why the Bible says that righteousness exalts a nation. Part of the outcome of righteousness is that we want to have both corporate and individual joy and the privilege of worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

Worship the Lord fervently v3-4. When we talk about worshipping the Lord in terms of praise with dance and musical instruments we are not talking about some mindless disco or ballroom dance, but a dance that is inspired of God and points always to God. Again the Psalmist takes time to remind us of the importance of music in worship. There have been times while in my study I have heard Christian choruses or instruments playing in the background which have been such a help in focusing on the God that I know, love and worship. I praise God for those who are able to sing or write Christian music or play musical instruments as I have to confess to being an all-rounder – I can't write, sing or play music with any skill to speak of.

PRAYER needed for:

- The Impact WA (Broome) team.
Pray for physical and spiritual health and for the Lord's protection over each ministry area. Eleven team members will be away 31/Aug-8/Sept
- The ongoing discipleship and growth of new believers around the world
- A number of opportunities (4 in total) to commence new editions of the paper. It is vital that each project has everything in place from translation work to distribution and discipleship material and most importantly the right partnerships before we commence
- Editions distributed this month – Australia, x5 different editions for South Africa and USA prison edition

We must see that such worship whether it be in terms of dance or musical instruments is truly bringing pleasure to God. I think it is important for us to recognise that true worship is all about enrichment of our Christian lives and not entertainment in our Christian walk. We need to recognise that true worship can bring deliverance from the bondage of sin and the world. One of the things I found interesting back in the Old Testament when Jehoshaphat was going into battle was that the primary weapon he used was music and song which praised and worshipped God. Now there is a different spin on having the right sort of weapons for battle. What it does do for us is highlight that praise and worship are an important part of knowing victory in our daily walk with God. Why would we say this? The answer is that when we praise and worship God we get our focus on God and in doing that we literally come into the very presence of God as it were in the circumstances in which we are in. It also helps us to take a new and different perspective on the circumstances in which we are enduring.

*Stay tuned for next month
as we look at the final verses
5-9 of Psalm 149*

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