Week after week after week, we gather in this big round room we call a sanctuary. So here we sit again, so what are we supposed to do?

- Should we do arts and crafts like the children? Make some artwork to take home and put on our fridge? That would be fun!
- Should we swap stories about the challenges and victories of our week? That would be interesting.
- Should we break up into small groups and brainstorm new ideas for ministry? That would be fruitful. Some good might come from that.
- Should we sit silent for an hour and pray without a single spoken word? Who here couldn’t benefit from a little peace and quiet?
- Should we read Scripture for an uninterrupted hour? The Word has never let us down.
- Should we watch an inspiring movie?
- Should we form a single file line and rub one another’s backs to relieve the assault of stress? I could use a back rub.

There are so many things we could do with this time, but what are we supposed to do? What does God say? What should we do in the sanctuary?

Psalm 150 gives us good instructions.

Read Psalm 150.

Have you ever noticed that every day is different? If our lives could be plotted on a graph, the line would not be level. There are highs and there are lows, and we just don’t know what a new week might bring. Sometimes, as a Christian, you feel like a balloon that couldn’t get any more inflated. Your spirit is wide open and bursting with joy because life is good. Those are mountaintop moments to be cherished. Like Peter, there are times when we want camp out on the mountaintop and avoid the inevitable descent.

Other times, our life feels like a pit with a 50 foot wall and no ladder. Sometimes we feel stuck, today we call it “a funk.” Some of you are there this morning. In these moments, most people are tempted to wallow in self-pity and so they pray for a revived heart.

What makes the Psalms so special to us is that they are so intensely devotional. They speak to heart in all sorts of situation. For centuries, commentators have struggled to categorize the Psalms into clean sections. So, there are…

- Messianic psalms which predict the coming of the Christ.
- Imprecatory psalms which are harsh in tone and speak of God’s judgment.
Psalms of ascent, which were used by Jews as they made their trek to Jerusalem every year.

Psalm 150, the psalm that you stare at today, is the final psalm in the book, but it is also the final psalm in the section titled “Hallel.” The last five psalms are known as ‘Hallelujah Psalms’.

\[
\text{Hallelujah} = \text{“Hallel”} + \text{“yah”} \\
\text{“Hallel”} = \text{to boast} \\
\text{“Yah”} = \text{God}
\]

The word ‘Hallelujah’ is a compound Hebrew word which consists of ‘hah-lale’ and ‘yah.’ ‘Hal-lale’ means ‘to boast’. ‘Yah’ is a shortened form of ‘Yahweh’, the Hebrew name for God. So, put those two words together and what do you get, “Hallel-ujah”, to boast about God.

Not every form of boasting is bad. There is at least ONE thing that you should run your mouth about—the awesome power of God. That should be the sound of a sanctuary.

In the Old Testament, the High Priest would enter into the Holy of Holies, in the temple. He would keep incense burning in this room that was thought to “belong to God.” All day every day, a pleasant offering was offered up. A praise to Him.

Now, let’s not be confused. The temple was sacked and destroyed in 70 AD, just as Jesus predicted. This sanctuary that you sit in does NOT serve the same purpose as Solomon’s grand design, but still, this sacred assembly is what is special to God. This congregating of His people. When the people of God come together, we must never forget our assignment: to say Hallel-ujah. I have come to boast about God.

Look with me at Psalm 150 and you will natural divisions in the text. This Psalm is every preacher’s dream as it easily divides into digestible pieces.

3 Questions about Praise and Worship

1. Where Should We Praise The Lord?
   
   **Every imaginable place.**
   
   The answer: Everywhere!

   Verse 1…

   The word “sanctuary” refers to the earthly place. “Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise Him all creatures HERE BELOW.” The Jews would have understood this as temple language. This was the purpose of their annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem. They came to the sanctuary to present their sacrifice and their praise to God.
Today we don’t have a temple with an outside court marked for Gentiles, an inner court for the Jews, an altar for animal sacrifice. Those things were all fulfilled in Christ, but we do have earthly bodies that are “temples of the living God.” And we are told to praise God in these sanctuaries.

So, we do not gather in this temple today. No, we are thousands of temples that sit under one roof. Everywhere we go, we take the Holy Spirit with us. Everywhere we go, we should give God praise. This is true in our homes, this true in our workplaces, but how much more when we gather for the sole purpose of singing his songs and telling of goodness.

Jesus prayed that God’s will would be done here below, as it is done in heaven. And what is done in heaven? The angels praise and glorify God. That’s what they do! They sing his praises. We would be wise to imitate them.

I love these old lyrics from 1865:

Lord, thou needest not, I know,
Service such as I can bring;
Yet I long to prove and show
Full allegiance to my King.
Thou an honor art to me:
Let me be a praise to thee.

--Frances Havergal (1865)

Wherever you are, show allegiance to your King. Sunday is the pep rally for God’s people, the time for us to say in one collective voice, Hallelujah! On Sunday, he rose from the grave! But don’t let Sunday be the only time you say it.

- On vacation, as you see your little ones playing in the sand, say praise the Lord.
- When you leave the doctor’s office, and the infection is gone, say praise the Lord.
- When your family fragments and comes back together for a holiday, say PTL.
- When your company recognizes your service, say PTL.
- When your marriage is feeling romantic, say PTL.
- When your church is healthy and helping you grow spiritually, say PTL.
- When your land is filled with abundant crop, say PTL.

Wherever you are, whatever you see, find a way to boast of God’s goodness. Don’t let anyone around you wonder where your full allegiance lies.

Praise the Lord all creatures everywhere.

2. Why Should We Praise the Lord?
   Because of who He is and what He has done.

That’s what verse 2 is about…
What the Psalmist refers to is the Great Plan of a Merciful God. Creation! He didn’t have to think you up. He didn’t have to make and mold you in your mother’s womb, like a potter with a piece of clay. He created you.

He didn’t have to re-create you either. When you were broken, he could have left your heart in a thousand pieces. He could have left you to your own making and let you feel the full weight of your sorry sin. But he came in the fullness of time, and he came in the fullness of grace and truth. Jesus came and turned your life around. He not only gave you a chance to live, but a second chance as well. He’s still dishing out mercy and grace.

Have you thought about that lately? Are you so wrapped up in yourself that you can’t see outside? Do you ever think about the Lord and say Hallelujah, for his power and surpassing greatness.

This little song has been bouncing around in my head this week…

When I Think about the Lord,
How He saved me, how He raised me,
how He filled me, with the Holy Ghost.
How He healed me, to the uttermost.

When I Think about the Lord,
how He picked me up and turned me around,
how He placed my feet on solid ground

Chorus*

It makes me wanna shout,
Hallelujah,
Thank you JESUS,
Lord, your worthy, of all the glory, and all the honor,
and all the praise...

People, do you feel that?!? Praising the Lord. It makes me strong. It gives ME power as I ascribe to Him how powerful he is.

Some Sundays I look back during the singing and I just don’t know if we’re gettin’ it! Do we realize who we are speaking to when we say those things? We aren’t talking to Travis, we aren’t talking to the choir, we are talking to God! We are like the High Priest who lifts the pleasant aroma offering with sincere hearts and voices.

Sing to him! Tell him, in your own off-pitch voice, tell him how good He is. He is your all in all!

This week, my daughter was singing in her room. She was singing to God. I stood
outside the door and listened. When she was done, I walked in and I said, “you gotta do that again! I need that in a bottle. I gotta keep it forever.” I gotta record that!

**Play Ava’s song.**

Sing it! I pray that she never stops singing that. I pray that when she’s 2nd grader, she’ll still sing it. When she’s a 6th grader, she’ll still sing it. When she’s a 16 year old driving a car, (Lord, help me!), she will sing it to the windshield. When she’s a mother rocking my grandchild to sleep, I pray that she will still be singing some song of God’s surpassing greatness.

Praise will usher you before a King. We enter His gates with Thanksgiving and into his courts with Praise. Praise and Worship! He is worthy of all the glory and all the honor and all the praise.

### 3. How Should We Praise The Lord?
**With Everything We’ve Got.**

The next three verses tell us how to do it. That’s exactly half the psalm, by the way. Three out of six verses speak about the method of worship…

Look again at vv.3,4,5..

The Psalmist says, “Pick up a trumpet! Grab a tambourine. Somebody dance! Who’s on strings? Who plays the flute? Let’s throw in some cymbal!” Let’s make some noise for God.

Now, don’t misunderstand the text here. This is not suggesting that the only way to praise God is with a full-blown orchestra. It’s not saying that music always has to be loud. It’s not saying that guitars are off limits, or the organ—since it’s not on the list. Don’t press the meaning of the text too far and mar the message. These are not God’s favorite instruments.

The point is: there is no limit to the amount of ways that we can praise the Lord. There’s not just one way that God prefers to receive worship. Now, listen to me. I know we all have our favorite way. We are all, in some ways, a product of our upbringing.

I grew up in the same kind of church that many of you did. It was a small country church in rural Illinois. We sang the great hymns of the faith. We had a little organ that Mrs. Peterson played. We had a ladies ensemble every few weeks to sprinkle in a little flavor to the congregational singing. Those four women met about 15 minutes before the service started and decided what they would sing. We didn’t have powerpoint projection on screens. We had pencils and paper. The preacher wore a suit and tie every Sunday, and people dressed up to come to church. There was one gentleman named Vernon that slept through every sermon. He must have been a narcoleptic cause hell, fire, and brimstone couldn’t keep him alert. At the end of the service, the preacher would hold the
door open and shake every person’s hand. Some have asked, “Why I don’t do that?”
Some Sundays at Tampico Baptist Church, we would get a little crazy and do lunch a
different way: potluck. We walked down the steep stairs to the musty basement and we
shared a miscellaneous meal. My two brothers and I would always avoid Ms. Louella’s
banana surprise and we made sure we ate what my mother cooked. We knew it was safe.

I smile just thinking about it. That was the culture that I grew up under. And you know
something? It was special. God used the sincere hearts of those saints to plant the seed
of the gospel in my heart. I grew up with the knowledge that Sunday is special because
it’s the Lord’s Day. He laid down on a cross for me on a Friday. He walked out of the
grave for me on a SUNDAY. He ascended into heaven so that He could send his Spirit
for me. And one day, he’s coming back for me.

And I can’t keep quiet about it. So what am I supposed to do? I’m not supposed to
worship tradition and be angry that the past is passed. I’m supposed to take my place in
the assembly of the believers, and with everything I’ve got, I praise him.

The great tragedy of the church in recent history is this: worship is not supposed to be the
place where we are divided. Worship is supposed to be the place where we are most
united. There’s not one way to do it!

I take that back! There is ONE way to do it: With your breath!

That’s how the Psalm ends. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!

Take that air of yours, that God just gave you in your lungs, and blow a horn. Sing a
song. Share a testimony. Voice a prayer. Use your mouth as a weapon to fight off the
Enemy of God.

Be who YOU are, and give the Lord your best praise, and let other people do the same. It
doesn’t matter what instrument you play, whether you sing alto or soprano, what matters
today and everyday, is that you have a heart that says to your mouth, “Open up, and
speak of His greatness.”

Praise him till your last breath is gone.