

Let's Join God's Saints for Church

- 1 **Praise the LORD.**  
**Praise God in his sanctuary;**  
**praise him in his mighty heavens.**
- 2 **Praise him for his acts of power;**  
**praise him for his surpassing greatness.**
- 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,**
- 5 **praise him with the clash of cymbals,**  
**praise him with resounding cymbals.**
- 6 **Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.**

If a child asks you what heaven will be like, what would you say? Well, you could say that we will stand around the throne of God with all the saints and angels and worship God. That is an accurate, scriptural answer. But does that sound appealing? Or do we find such things like “worship” to be old or boring?

I submit to you that worship isn't boring. The word “worship” comes from an older, Old English word, “worth-ship.” It is showing someone how much they are worth. Worship is listening to and admiring what God does and then responding to it. Guess what? It isn't boring, not when we see what God does.

Today is a “Saints Triumphant Sunday.” It pictures for us the saints gathering around the throne of God to worship him. Yes, we will do that in heaven. And I guarantee you no one will find it boring or make excuses to miss church. But we can, and should, start our worship now here on earth. Psalm 150 is a fitting reminder to praise God. It tells us where, why, and finally how. First where.

*I. Where to praise God.*

**Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens.** One place to praise God is in his sanctuary. Just what is a sanctuary? Literally it means a holy or special place. A bird sanctuary is where endangered birds are kept safe. When I read this passage, I first thought of our hearts as a sanctuary to worship God. Paul once wrote to the Ephesians, **“Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.”** He also told the Colossians, **“Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts.”**

There are two reasons why you would say “thank you.” Either because mom or dad made you or because you are truly thankful in your heart. Worship begins in the heart. Look at some of the great hymns of the world. When John Newton wrote the words to “Amazing Grace,” he wasn't just slapping words down in order to make a few bucks. He truly felt and appreciated God's grace and gratitude flow out of his heart into song. Isn't it wonderful to have a hymnal? Each hymn is a story like that. What a joy it is to be able to sing with them, to let their words express our thanks and gratitude.

Another sanctuary is the house of God, our place of worship. It has been that way since the beginning of history, believers worshipping God in special places, like Abel offering sacrifices on an altar. In the Psalms you have David and Asaph arranging music and musicians to play music in God's temple. How thankful we are to have a sanctuary that is filled with music, the choirs and tone chimes, congregational singing.

Another sanctuary is the mighty heavens. The word “heaven” in the Bible means several things. It can refer to the air we breath surrounds our earth. It could refer to the universe and the stars. Worship isn't confined to churches. Worship goes on everywhere. Listen to the birds or observe the stars. All creation worships God. If birds can take the time to sing, surely we can, too.

And one day we will all be in the sanctuary known as Heaven. Maybe the idea of worshipping God all day long may not sound all that exciting on earth. But it is in heaven. Think of our three members who have gone to heaven this year. I know they are singing louder than ever in heaven. Why, then, do people complain about or call worship boring on earth? That is because we are still hampered by a sinful nature. Have you ever been someplace with someone who didn't want to be there? I remember going to a movie and one of my friends hated it. All throughout the movie he kept saying, “This is stupid. When can I go home?” What a killjoy. When you get up and get dressed and come to church, that killjoy comes right along with you. I am not talking about your husband or teenage son. He is you. He is inside you of you. He is that pesky, annoying sinful nature who grumbles and complains the entire way.

I submit to you that worshipping God is not boring at all. The sinful nature doesn't want to be there and tells us how boring it is to him. Churches in heaven will not fill up from the back first. No one will hide in the back just mumbling words. It will be that awesome. Why? Because of God, and all he does.

## *II. Why we worship.*

**Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.** They have the Heisman Trophy for the best college football player. They have Oscars for the best actors. Imagine what kind of trophy God deserves for his acts of power.

The first act of power that comes to mind is his creation. Airline jets fascinate me. Millions of parts and miles of wire all have to work together to make it fly. Imagine it flying every day for fifteen years. Whoever designs a jet must be really good. Now look at human DNA. I've read that there are 3.1 million parts that make up DNA, something so small you can't see it. Now imagine all DNA and all cells and organs of the body working together. Expand it to the world and the universe and it makes a jet look like a paper airplane. The designer of all of this must be awesome, and he is. We should all bow in awe before God's creation.

And think of the power he uses in the world. Think about the bodies of Pharaoh's army washing up to shore after the parting the Red Sea or the walls of Jericho, or Lazarus coming out of the grave. Imagine Christ giving the command and all the graves opening at once.

But the greatest reason is his salvation. Remember John Newton and why he wrote "Amazing Grace." He did because he wanted to thank God for saving a wretch like himself. The key to worship starts with the law, the showing of our sins. Does sin really bother us? Are we pretty good of excusing it away or at blaming others? Every Sunday we use the law to show sins we commit. Let the law show are far short we are of God's glory. Let it show what we really deserve from God. In the book of Joshua, we come upon the story of a man named Achan. Listen to how Joshua treated him, **"My son, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and give him the praise. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me."** We worship God when we confess our sins.

And then we will see God's surpassing greatness as he forgives those sins. As it says in 1 John, **"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God."** That great love moved God to send Jesus as our sin substitute who was sacrificed for our sins upon the altar of God's justice. Imagine that, you are all now children of God, freely forgiven. Just like that, "Amazing Grace" isn't John Newton's hymn. It is your hymn and the hymn of every believer. Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.

So we have plenty to worship God for, especially for his gift of forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

## *III. How to worship God.*

But how? <sup>3</sup> **Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre,** <sup>4</sup> **praise him with timbrel and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe,** <sup>5</sup> **praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.** <sup>6</sup> **Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.**

There was a time, I understand, when they didn't allow the saxophone in church music because it was associated with jazz. But not any more. Musical instruments are used for all kinds of music like jazz and rock and classical. And in church. Seven instruments are listed in Psalm 150. Add to it what has been invented since: piano, drums, guitars and so on. All can be, should be used to worship God.

But don't forget the human voice. This, too, is an instrument. Granted, not all voices are alike. The only way I can sing a vibrato like professional opera singers is if I pinch my throat and shake it. There are better voices than mine in this congregation. But you don't need special training to use this voice instrument. And if you might feel embarrassed by your singing ability, God isn't. He loves to hear all voices raised in worship.

Finally, one other instrument we have is our Christian lives. Paul tried to settle a dispute between a vegetarian segment of the congregation from the meat-eating segment. In conclusion he said, **"Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, to it all to the glory of God."** We worship God with everything we say or do. Imagine the Christian at work. Where others may be complaining about the pay or the assistant manager, the Christian is happy to work, and works hard. That humble contentment in his or her heart is just as beautiful as a fanfare played on the organ and sung by a choir.

I remember attending a symphony at Christmas time. The orchestra and chorus sang a number of wonderful pieces. At the end, they sang the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's Messiah. Only, they had a twist. They had the words printed in the program and encouraged everyone to join in. And they did. I thought they would blow the roof off. The word, "Hallelujah," is Hebrew and it means "Praise the Lord." It is used 13 times in these short six verses of Psalm 150. It shows us how important worship is in our lives. And when we worship, we join all the angels and saints in heaven, in fact all of creation in heaven and on earth. Why not? The Lord is certainly worth it. INJ Amen.