

When Creation Sings

3-22-2020

Psalm 148:1-6; 66:4; 98:4-9; Isaiah 55:12

Introduction – The God who created the universe left His fingerprints everywhere! Creation sings of her Creator! Creation's song is so loud and clear that the apostle Paul would write that we have no excuse for not knowing God. Romans 1:19–20 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

I. The first and last songs of the bible.

1. The first song – The song of Moses, written after a great victory.
2. The last song – The song of the Lamb, anticipates a great victory.

II. The song of battle.

1. Jehoshaphat used an unusual method to win the battle against a formidable foe.
2. Jehoshaphat fasted and prayed (2 Chronicles 20:20-21).

III. The song of breakthrough.

1. Paul and Silas sang songs of praise at midnight in prison.
2. Song is a mighty means of breakthrough and liberation.

IV. The song of birthing. Isaiah 54:1-3

V. When God sings.

1. Can you hear the voice that said "Let there be light," reverberating around the heavens in triumphant song? He will rejoice over you with joy (Zephaniah 3:17).

V. When creation sings.

1. The Lord is the great Creator and Sustainer of all creation (Psalm 148:1-6).
2. Join the chorus of all creation.
3. Creation's joy at God's redemptive work (Isaiah 55:12).
4. Creation must sing praise to God; we must choose to praise God.
5. Singing praise to God isn't always our first reaction to our frustrations, so we must remind ourselves to do it.
6. When there are battles to be fought, breakthroughs to be obtained, victories to be won, may we claim the promises of God, stand on His word and sing, sing, sing.
7. Do you have a voice this morning? Then shout His praise. Has life beaten you down, has fear tried to overwhelm you, then trust God, stand on His promises, feed your faith not your fear, hear the voice of God, not the voice of the world and praise God.
8. "Praise the Lord" Written by Elliott B. Bannister, Michael Vincent Hudson.
9. As you draw near and worship God with a thankful heart, you can be released from poverty, debt, sickness and depression, loneliness or hopelessness, addiction or family strife. Praise the LORD you people of God, for he is worthy of our praise.

Don't wait for the circumstances to change before you begin to praise God. Worship first, then the victory will come.

I resonated with what the psalmist said:

***Psalm 8:3-4**

3 When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
4 what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?

As we continue our series "Why We Sing" from the last five Psalms in the book of Psalms, **turn with me in your Bibles to Psalm 148:1-6.**

The Psalmist begins with a cosmic focus. "Praise the LORD from the heavens." Sun, moon, and stars. Highest heavens. The universe itself is in view, and in all of its glory is engaged in the act of praising God. From sounds that we cannot hear to sights that we as human beings cannot see, the universe is one big act of praise to God. Our universe is immense, and expanding. Best estimates are that the universe we inhabit is about 93 billion light years in diameter. That's as far as we can tell. Most of us can't even comprehend something that vast. They call it the "observable" universe because we can't see any farther than that yet. And that number is with earth at the center, and there's no evidence at all that earth is the center of the universe. Now, a light year is the distance light travels in a year, or about 9.5 trillion miles. Now even the number one trillion is something most of us can't imagine. Think about it this way. You know how long a second is, right? Unless it's Eli being told its time to "tech down" and he says "in a sec." He means about 20 minutes. But a second is basically the snap of a finger, isn't it. So a million seconds ago was twelve days ago. Now, a billion seconds ago? May 1983. A billion is a lot larger than a million. A trillion seconds ago? 2700 B.C. To give it some scale, our planet is almost 93 million miles from the sun, and it takes light 8 minutes and 20 seconds to cover that distance. So if you left earth flying at the speed of light, not of sound, which is a barrier we can break, but of light, a speed we haven't even come close to approaching, it would take you 46.5 billion years to fly to the edge of the known universe. And what's beyond that. We don't know. We do know that there are 10 trillion galaxies in this universe, and the number of stars? Roughly 1 to the 24th power. That's a 1 with 24 "0"s after it. But for all that we can see, most of it, we can't.

The Psalmist has taken us from the grandeur of the universe to the beauty and majesty of this tiny planet, but he doesn't stop there. He gets even more intimate. Look at V. 14. He talks about the people of God. You see, not only does our immense, all-powerful, incomprehensible God see and love this tiny planet on which we live, he sees his people on this tiny planet. And he came to this tiny planet in the form of one of us. When God the Son came in the person of Jesus Christ, this immense, all-powerful, incomprehensible God made himself like us, and walked among us, and allowed us in our insignificant smallness to nail him to a cross and put him through the most unbearable death humankind has invented,

to forgive us. To shower us with his grace and mercy. How many of us have ever stepped on an ant? Anyone? Most of us have at one point or another. And how many of us have cried about it, about the loss of a single ant? I'd guess none of us. They're insignificant to us, to our lives. In the eyes of this universe, we are much smaller to God than the smallest ant is to us. And yet God sees us. Loves us. Cares for us. Each one of us. Every human being that is suffering right now.

But we're different than the rest of creation. This psalm is actually closely tied to Genesis 1. It's poetic language echoes the poetry of Genesis 1, which is written in Hebrew poetic form, but the way. And Genesis 1:27 tells us that we are created by God in the image of God. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Now, I could fill my office from floor to ceiling and wall to wall with theological books and papers on what it means to be created in the image of God. It's a huge topic. And according to this verse, male and female coming together are a part of the image of God in us. It is our relationality. But there's another aspect too. And that is our ability to choose. From the highest of heavens to the smallest speck of dust on this tiny planet, all of creation is praising God because it must. But as human beings created in the image of God, we must choose to worship God. And so often, I choose not to. Author and speaker Stormie Omartian tells this story: "I can't do it!" I cried to God. "I can't handle the housework, my work, the loneliness of a husband who works so much." Then I sensed the Holy Spirit saying, You are trying to do everything on your own strength. Just worship me—and I'll do the rest. I said out loud, "I praise you, God, in the midst of my situation. Thank you that nothing is too hard for you." Slowly, the pressure left—my burden was now his. Praise isn't always my first reaction to frustration, so I have to remind myself to do it. But now, when my flesh can't go any further, I stop and worship God.^[v]

Margaret Sangster Phippen wrote that in the mid 1950s her father, British minister W. E. Sangster, began to notice some uneasiness in his throat and a dragging in his leg. When he went to the doctor, he found that he had an incurable disease that caused progressive muscular atrophy. His muscles would gradually waste away, his voice would fail, his throat would soon become unable to swallow. Sangster threw himself into his work in British home missions, figuring he could still write and he would have even more time for prayer. "Let me stay in the struggle Lord," he pleaded. "I don't mind if I can no longer be a general, but give me just a regiment to lead." He wrote articles and books, and helped organize prayer cells throughout England. "I'm only in the kindergarten of suffering," he told people who pitied him. Gradually Sangster's legs became useless. His voice went completely. But he could still hold a pen, shakily. On Easter morning, just a few weeks before he died, he wrote a letter to his daughter. In it, he said, "It is terrible to wake up on Easter morning and have no voice to shout, 'He is risen!'—but it would be still more terrible to have a voice and not want to shout."^[vi]

Do you have a voice this morning? Then shout his praise. Has life beaten you down to the point where you can't praise God? Then let us praise God for you, around you, until you can praise again. "Praise the LORD from the heavens ... Praise the LORD from the earth ... Praise the LORD you people of God, for he is worthy of our praise.

HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING?

ROBERT WADSWORTH LOWRY, 1869

1. My life flows on in end-less song, above earth's lamentation. I hear the real though
far off song that hails a new creation. No storm can shake my inmost calm, while
to that rock I'm clinging; It sounds an echo in my soul. How can I keep from singing?—

Refrain

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2. What though the tempest round me roars, I know the truth, it liveth.
What though the darkness round me close, songs in the night it giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that rock I'm clinging;
Since love is lord of heaven and earth, How can I keep from singing?

3. I lift my eyes, the cloud grows thin
I see the blue above it
And day by day this pathway smooths,
Since first I learned to love it,

4. The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart
A fountain ever springing
For all things are mine since I am his
How can I keep from singing?

No storm can shake my inmost calm
While to that refuge clinging
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth
How can I keep from singing?