

## Psalm 148

<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD!  
Praise the LORD from the heavens;  
praise God in the heights!  
<sup>2</sup> Praise God, all God's angels;  
praise God, all God's host!

<sup>3</sup> Praise God, sun and moon;  
praise God, all you shining stars!  
<sup>4</sup> Praise God, you highest heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens!

<sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
for God commanded and they were created.  
<sup>6</sup> God established them for ever and ever;  
God fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

<sup>7</sup> Praise the LORD from the earth,  
you sea monsters and all deeps,  
<sup>8</sup> fire and hail, snow and frost,  
stormy wind fulfilling God's command!

<sup>9</sup> Mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars!  
<sup>10</sup> Wild animals and all cattle,  
creeping things and flying birds!

<sup>11</sup> Kings of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the earth!  
<sup>12</sup> Young men and women alike,  
old and young together!

<sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
for God's name alone is exalted;  
God's glory is above earth and heaven.  
<sup>14</sup> God has raised up a horn for God's people,  
praise for all the Lord's faithful,  
for the people of Israel who are close to God.  
Praise the LORD!

Can you feel it? Imagine reciting and singing this psalm together in worship! The vibrancy and energy of it! The enthusiasm called for. It could be on any gym workout playlist with the right music, of course 😊. Whatever you may be going through, whatever the reasons to perplexity

and complexity and even despair, this psalm is a reminder that whatever the situation, praise of God and awareness that God is in and around and through all that is life, is a wonderful tonic we all need...

Now I realize there are seasons of life, times of life, days, hours and moments when such a psalm and the energy in it collides with what we're facing and living... It's true... But if the rhythm of our lives has no space for such enthusiastic praise, we are missing something vital, something we need like air to breathe and water to drink... How may we recover or re-invigorate a spirit of praise in us, despite anything we may be going through that would shut down any thoughts of praise?

One way this psalm teaches us to praise with spirit is by transforming the way we contemplate the natural world around us. As we all know, our relationship with mother earth is a troubled one, and unless that changes beginning yesterday, the future looks grim. A broken relationship with the mother who nourishes and sustains us is fatal for us. What this psalm, like many parts of the scriptures, teaches us is that mother earth, nature (call her what you will) is already in a relationship of praise with God our creator. This psalm not only calls all of nature to praise God, but it presumes all nature is constantly praising God. Sun and moon and "shining stars", the rain, the fire, the frost and the snow, the mountains and hills, the fruit trees and cedars, the great sea creatures and those that reside in the ocean depths, the animals wild and domestic, creatures beneath the soil, and those that fly... and last of all human creatures of all genders and stations of life are called to join the song and dance of praise to creator God... It's as if the psalmist knows that unless we discover how all of nature is praising God already we will not discover our own core motivation and energy to do so. Wow!

Imagine if we pondered our world right now and understood its constant ebb and flow as an expression of praise to God... By simply being and moving and changing and responding it is communicating and praising. And even in awareness of the collision of mother earth with us humans in all the spaces we take up and the stress on mother earth we cause by our lifestyles, praise of God is the first and the last note played and sung daily all around us...

So then, how may praising God involve our relationship to all life around us? How may we change the channel for ourselves a little bit and rediscover another dimension in us that knows how to praise? Perhaps we can integrate some time in our day and our week to go outside or take time with our plants and animals indoors... Perhaps we can give thanks and praise for the air we are breathing in at this very moment, the space we are inhabiting, all the movement happening in and around us we don't see from the tiniest molecules and movements of energy to the great cataclysms of nature happening ever more frequently as our planet warms... Perhaps we can rediscover praise in the midst of our struggle to hope and engage life toward justice and peace... Perhaps...

May we rethink praise in our lives and may we learn from mother earth to move in ever new directions and practices in our lives... May we offer up prayers as we take a walk outside or stand before each of our plants or the trees around us or the food we prepare and take in - animal and vegetable... May prayers of praise to God and thanksgiving to God arise within us...

Maybe some of you already know how to praise God through your relationship with mother earth... I know I need to constantly re-imagine my relationship with God through my relationship to mother earth, and that must include ever new ways to praise... What about you?

PRAYER: We praise you creator God... like the sun, the moon and the stars, the rain and wind, the warmth of the sun and the cold of the snow... the creatures in the air, on the ground, under the earth and in the waters... the life we can see and feel and that which is invisible to our senses yet ever on the move around us and flowing through us too... May we appreciate anew how praise to you the source and creator of all life is a constant happening... Teach us how to join the dance of praise... teach us how to sing and pray praise... especially teach us praise as we are struggling in a relationship, our vocation, our health, our future, our stress and discontent, our sadness... May praise refresh and renew us... May praise to you bring calm, assurance and peace into our lives... In Jesus' name... Amen.