

Introduction

- **Hallelujah!!! Its Sunday!!!**
- Is that your reaction when you wake up on an average Sunday morning?
- I guess that if you are anything like me, that's not your reaction on **ANY** morning!
 - groggy, slow coming too!
- I suppose there are a few days when its no hardship to get up:
 - Christmas Day for a young child!
 - day of some exciting event, something long anticipated - going on holiday, special trip, whatever;
 - maybe even coming out for an early celebration of Easter this morning?
- But for most of us, those seem to be **rare occasions**.
- In the run up to Easter we've looked at some of the Psalms of ascent, leading up to the great festivals of praise in the Jerusalem Temple
 - and just as we've "**peaked**" today, so the original Temple worshippers would have "**peaked**" as they actually came to the Temple to worship
- The Psalmist is just bursting with joy and exuberance:
 - you can hardly imagine him having struggled to get out of bed on the day he penned these words!
- And what was it that gave rise in him to such joy, such excitement?
 - simply this, the chance to praise God!
- The Psalmist, in pouring forth his exuberant, heartfelt praise for God shows us the highest, the greatest, the best dimension of our lives here on earth (as it will be in heaven) - **the praise of God**.
- His is a **vision of the ultimate submission of the whole world to God** - a day to which Church still looks forward.
 - a vision - showing the destination to which we should be heading; showing us the way.
- **Structure:**
- As he pours forth his praise, he touches on **four big questions** about praising God that we do well to hear Scripture's own answer to:
 - **Where** should we praise God?
 - **Why** should we praise God?
 - **How** should we praise God?
 - **Who** should praise God?
- Work our way through Psalm....

Where? (v.1)

- How often have you heard someone say: "**I can worship God as well on the golf course as in church....**" (or pick your own favourite church alternative!)
- **Is that true?** Or not true? Or partly true?
- **Psalmist says two things in v.1:**
- **First** he emphasises the special place where God's people of his day worshiped - the Temple, built to God's specification and in its very architecture revealing something of God's character:
 - God revealed as holy, separate, the holy of holies, the curtain separating sinful man, that same curtain that was torn asunder as Jesus' died...
 - and yet also place of sacrifice whereby he **MAY** be approached!
- A **focus** for God's people, a special place, a place that facilitates our worship of God, to **bring to mind** all he is and has done.
- And so we should recognise that God has built us in such a way that we find special places, places to gather with other Christians, places that speak by their architecture, by what happens their, by their atmosphere... that speak of God.
- And so, no we can't worship God as well on the golf course as anywhere - **for if**

- we limit ourselves to the golf course, we miss out!
- Remember the promises Morag & Julia took this morning to **join regularly with God's people for worship?**
 - They are **for our good**, since God knows we won't grow in faith without the stimulation of joining with one another.
 - and so **it is worth encouraging each other to be at worship**, and to continue to do that;
 - for being at worship has tremendous value for our souls!
 - But **second** point is that our worship should **extend out from the church**, the particular place of worship, **into the whole of life** - into the heavens, right across the sky, across the breadth of everywhere you can go!
 - Our worship is like a plant planted in a pot, taking its nourishment and strength from regular feeding in worship in church, but growing and flourishing and expressing praise in all of life:
 - this **"non-church"** worship...
 - both the **private times of praise**, whether at home alone, or struck by the beauty of creation and caused to exclaim God's goodness;
 - and also the **life that points to God** in its **contentedness**, its **peace**, its **integrity** - that brings praise to God's name through its very character.
 - "Praise the Lord! Praise God in his Temple! Praise his strength in heaven!"

Why? (v.2)

- But why should we praise God?
- Just because we are meant to?
- Doesn't exactly sound like a reason for jumping out of bedding shouting "Hallelujah! Its Sunday!"
- Two things:
 - first, what he has done, his acts, **primarily in salvation**, but also creation; provision for us across whole range of our needs - for salvation from sin (hence so many hymns about Cross); for provision of bread and life and breath and friends and love and!
 - **so turn these things (Cross!) over and over; cf Helen and I reminiscing about events in our courtship or early married life...**
 - secondly, who he is in himself **"supreme/surpassing greatness"** - infinite, powerful, holy, righteous, tender, love - what reasons to praise him!
- As we even begin to get to grips with all that God is and has done we'll never be able to cease from praising him!
- Not because we are meant to, but because we are full, over-flowing with wonder at God!

How? (v.3-5)

- Where and why... OK - **but how?**
- With everything you have!
- Stott: **"In the uninhibited exuberance of lives devoted to God"**
- Includes creativity, music, words, actions, drama, visuals...
- That includes what would traditionally have been described as worship - hymn singing, public prayers led by someone, the reading of Scripture and the exploration of its meaning through a sermon.
- But the mere repetition of those actions does not make for true worship.
- John 4:24, Jesus' words: **"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."**
- What we do must **give expression to what we mean, to what is in our hearts.**
- Maybe, with all the new choruses we sing these days, and their emotionalism, you have some sympathy with a Presbyterian minister who, several years ago, was puzzled by the laughter which greeted his speech at a meeting of clergy in Belfast. He stood up to voice the strongest protest against the emotionalism of the

charismatic movement: "I object," he thundered, "to all these feelings. All this playing on our feelings, stirring up our feelings, expressing our feelings. We hear too much about feelings. Let me say," he concluded, "that I feel very strongly about this!"

- Sometimes we do feel uncomfortable or unsure about what happens in worship, because it is not familiar, and we don't like the uncertainty that can bring.
 - that has certainly been my experience at times
- But we need to learn to appreciate the value of that which is unfamiliar, while still treasuring and being built up by that which is more familiar.
 - that's why I try and have a mixture of styles in most services, and sometimes not just in terms of the music;
 - occasionally all new or all old;
 - consciously trying to give fullest expression to all the gifts God has given his church down through the years.
- Here different musical instruments conjure up images of different kinds of occasions:
 - trumpet - great national and sacred occasions, like year of jubilee;
 - tambourine and dancing - joyous celebrations;
 - strings and flute - simple music making, everyday;
- Not to be pressed, but indicative of spread throughout life.
- With everything you have!
- Stott: "In the uninhibited exuberance of lives devoted to God"

Who? (v.6)

- That leaves just one question left:
 - Who is to praise God?
- Simple and clear answer:
 - Everyone - call and opportunity is for everyone to praise God!
- **Revelation 5:13**

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"
- Call is for everyone to praise - and Revelation passage makes clear that one day everyone will be forced to comply, like it or not, on the day when God's glory is revealed, when the dead are judged.
- We have opportunity now to bow in glad surrender to God, to give him praise, to build our lives round this centre-point of glorious praise, freely given.
- Don't marginalise giving God his rightful place - dangerous thing to do.
- Rather lets learn together to say:
- **Hallelujah! Its Sunday!!**
- Praise God! Amen!
- As we sing together now we have an opportunity to give expression to all our thankfulness for what God has done, all our love for him, all our wonder at his character and nature, all our awe at his greatness!
- Jesus, we celebrate Your victory
Jesus, we revel in Your love.....