

Thanksgiving

Psalm 148: "God's Fingerprints Are on Every Living Thing."

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In Nomine Iesu

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Psalm 148

- ¹ Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights!
² Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!
³ Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light!
⁴ Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, And you waters above the heavens!
⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He commanded and they were created.
⁶ He also established them forever and ever; He made a decree which shall not pass away.
⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth, You great sea creatures and all the depths;
⁸ Fire and hail, snow and clouds; Stormy wind, fulfilling His word;
⁹ Mountains and all hills; Fruitful trees and all cedars;
¹⁰ Beasts and all cattle; Creeping things and flying fowl;
¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples; Princes and all judges of the earth;
¹² Both young men and maidens; Old men and children.
¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven.
¹⁴ And He has exalted the horn of His people, The praise of all His saints -- Of the children of Israel, A people near to Him. Praise the LORD! (NKJV)
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.
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In Christ Jesus, who has touched the human race with His good gifts of life and salvation, dear fellow redeemed:

When God made the first man and woman, He said to them, "*Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth*" (Gen. 1:28). But making use of God's creation is not the same as controlling it. We learn that lesson over and over again, that we are hardly in control of creation.

We learned that lesson this week as we watched a weather system move through our area with the potential to upset Thanksgiving travel plans. We learned that lesson in the spring when it was difficult to get the crop planted. We learned it again this fall when it was difficult to get the crop harvested. We do not control when the sun shines or the rain and snow fall. We do not control whether it is warm or cold, wet or dry, windy or calm.

And there is so much more. We have little to do with the vast animal kingdom around us, besides our domesticated animals. We do not care for all the little bugs and four-legged creatures. We do not watch over the birds to make sure they are doing alright. They exist mostly apart from us and find their food, homes, and communities on their own. The plant kingdom is

much the same. We do not plant most trees, flowers, and grasses. We do not water them and tend to their growth. They grow up and flourish by themselves.

Except that nothing really functions by itself, not the plants, not the animals, and not humankind. Each living thing is dependent in some way on other living things. And all living things find their source and supply in God's creation and providence. **God's Fingerprints Are on Every Living Thing.**

This is why the psalmist calls on the whole creation to praise the LORD. He starts in the heavens and works his way to earth. He first calls on the angels and hosts of heaven to praise Him, and we know that they do. They are always gathered around the throne praising Him for His mighty works and for His mercy toward mankind. Even the sun, moon, and stars are invited to join in the chorus, along with all the parts of God's creation beyond and above our universe.

But the praise of God is not complete if it only comes from heaven. It must also come from the earth, from all things animate and inanimate. It must come from the sea creatures in the watery depths, from the elements of nature, the mountains and hills, the trees, and the animals. Above all, it must come from the crown of God's creation, from humankind – from kings, princes, and rulers to the common and poor, from the young and old, male and female.

God spoke all these things into existence. He set them in order. He made the planets spin and the stars shine. He created the laws of nature and time and the changing of the seasons. He ordained marriage and family and through them created government and community. These things were all established through His Word, and they are upheld through His Word. If the LORD took back His Word, everything around us would fall to pieces. Nothing could survive apart from God – including us.

This is why we *"praise the name of the LORD" – "For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven."* There is no God but the Triune God. He is the one and only God. He shares His glory with no other because there are no other gods. He deserves the praise of every living thing.

And yet praise for Him is not always on our lips. Sometimes we are upset and impatient with Him because things are not going the way we want. Or we are too distracted to think of praising Him. Or we praise ourselves instead of Him – that one happens a lot at Thanksgiving. Everybody says how thankful they are, but where is their thanks directed? Often not toward God, but toward themselves – for the house they bought, the stuff they have accumulated, the family they produced. They don't recognize that it is God alone who gives these good things.

If we don't see God's fingerprints on all the little things we enjoy in this life, we won't see His fingerprints on the biggest thing either. Our God has controlled the events in human history in such a way as to deliver on His promise to Adam and Eve. They sinned and brought death and destruction to the whole creation. But He promised them a Savior. He determined to send His eternally-begotten Son to the sinful world, so that He might save it.

The LORD kept this promise. The Creator entered His creation in a magnificent way. The Son of God became a Man. He clothed Himself in our flesh by being born of the Virgin Mary. So the Maker of all living things, the Source of all life, the One who *“upholds the universe by the word of his power”* (Heb. 1:3), inserted Himself in this world of disorder, disease, and death. He came to re-establish the rule of life. He came to give hope to the dying. He came to save your soul and your body.

This hope and life could only come through His death. That seems backward, wrong. Why should life only be possible through death? The death of our innocent Lord was the price that had to be paid for our salvation. It was the only way to set right what we had done wrong. It was the only way to atone for our sins of impatience, bad priorities, ungratefulness, and every other transgression we have committed against God. Our fingerprints of sin are on everything—everything that we touch—but His fingerprints of grace wipe away every evidence of our wrongs.

Therefore we praise Him. We join the angels in heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, the snow and wind, the hills and trees, the cattle and birds, and scores of the faithful in thanking and praising the LORD. It is He who made us, He who cares for us, and He who has saved us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.

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