7/30/23 - Psalm 75 - "Rejoice! For God Reigns"

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Preacher: Lawalyn Lewis Jr.

[0:00] We'll be reading from Psalm 75. And this is in the ESV, which is the Bible's in front in the chairs. Okay.

To the choir master, according to Do Not Destroy, a psalm faceth, a song. We give thanks to you, O God.
We give thanks, for your name is near. We recount your wondrous deeds. At the set time that I appoint, I will judge with equity.
When the earth totters and all its inhabitants, it is I who keeps steady its pillars. Selah. I say to the boastful, do not boast.
And to the wicked, do not lift up your horn. Do not lift up your horn on high or speak with haughty neck. For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up.
[1:02] But it is God who executes judgment. putting down one and lifting up another. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup with foaming wine well mixed, and he pours out from it.

And all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs. But I will declare it forever. I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.
All the horns of the wicked I will cut off. But the horns of the righteous shall be lifted up. That is the word of the Lord. Hi.
I'm sorry. I'm just, it's just a good moment. So my name is LeWaylon Lewis Jr. That's my name. I know it doesn't say that on the screen, but that was wrong. So just no worry about that.
But I'm one of the pastoral apprentices here at Steel Valley Church. And I am very excited to be here. Just a moment, like a year ago, I was baptized over there and now I'm here preaching.
[2:14] So that's a testimony. You have one. And today I'm going to preach Psalm 75. So Psalm 75 was written by Asaph.

And Asaph, according to 2 Chronicles 6, verse 31 to 32, was a Levitical priest and a worship leader who would sing songs in the tabernacle in the Old Testament.
And one of those songs he would sing is Psalm 75. And one of the main aspects of Psalm 75 is the reign of God. Is the reign of God.
I'll repeat that one more time. One of the main aspects of Psalm 75 is the reign of God. For this psalm gives us all assurance that God is truly in control.
And the way how Asaph shows this or displays it is in many ways. And among the five books of the psalms, Psalm 75 is in book 3. And in book 3 of the psalms, it reflects back to the injustice done to Israel.
[3:20] It was during a dark time. A period when there seemed to be no hope. Where it seemed as if God is not in control at all. Perhaps that's one of you today.

You've probably dealt with many tragedies. You've probably dealt with a divorce. I don't know. You're probably dealing with an eviction. Or struggling to pay the bills. I have no clue what you're going through. But that's how Israel felt.
And you're probably sitting here wondering, just like Israel, where is God in this time of affliction? Well, Asaph gives Israel and all of us encouragement.
That God does reign. And that's why I aim to show you all today. For my sermon title is as such, Rejoice for God reigns. And my first, well, my sections is verse 1 to 5 is my first section.
Verses 6 to 8 is my second. And verse 9 and 10 is my third. Before we begin, I'm very nervous. I'm going to pray first. And I'm just going to pray right now.
[4:26] Dear God, we thank you for this amazing time. Thank you for your amazing grace. Lord, I pray you may open our hearts and allow our hearts to receive the word you have prepared, me included.

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Lord, I pray you may just use me as a vessel. For it is such an honor to be used by such a holy God. Lord, I pray that we may be encouraged. And I pray that we just may praise you.
In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Starting off in verse 1 of the text is my first section. As I titled it, the church gives thanks that God's name is near.
As verse 1 says in the text, We give thanks to you, O God. We give thanks. For your name is near. We recount your wondrous deeds. You see something rather interesting in verse 1?
There's a collection of people thanking God. And the reason why they're thanking God is because his name is near. Okay. So we know so far who they're thanking, which is God.
[5:35] Why they're thanking him? Because his name is near. But how do they know God's name is near? Let us also answer the next sentence of verse 1. As they say, we recount your wondrous deeds.

But what are these wondrous deeds? And how do we today know that God's name is near? Let us continue to the next verse to find out.
In verse 2, we see a switch in perspective. As it goes from plural to singular, using I. As we see God speak.
And in verse 2, God says, At the set time that I appoint, I will judge of equity. There's a couple things here. First, we see God display his power before all.
As he says, at the set time I appoint. You see, God doesn't serve time. Time serves God. This goes back to Genesis 1.1.
[6:35] Where God created time. Well, time began with God because he's timeless. Space began with God because he is spaceless. And matter began with God because he is immaterial. But then the verse continues.

As he says, he will set a time to judge of equity. I often think about our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ all throughout the world being persecuted and killed for their faith.
In such unjust ways. I imagine the screams and the terrors and the fear. But I also imagine the peace that they had.
Knowing that they did something that was worth it. I don't know about any of you, but when I think about that stuff, it creates a longing for justice in my soul.
And that is exactly how Israel felt at this time. And in verse 2, we see God giving them a promise. A promise that his justice will come and prevail. For God is advocating justice for his people.
[7:40] And in verse 3, it says, Likewise, when the earth totters and all its inhabitants, it is I who keep steady its pillars. My friends, have you experienced any tottering recently?

Amen. Amen. Can you all think about one tottering event that happened recently? I mean, I certainly can.
You know, COVID, the COVID pandemic was quite something, wasn't it? It was truly tottering. The media spreading lies. People who are constantly living in fear. Many of you missing work and able to support yourselves or your families.
And our economy going straight down to the gutter. And it still is. Yet in verse 3, we see that it is God that steadies the world through such an event.
For God sustains the world through his tottering. He is also the one that allows the earth to totter as well. He is God. Just these two verses show God's wondrous deeds.
[8:56] That made these people, Israel, know that God's name is near. For the collective nation of Israel giving assurance and a heart of thanksgiving are reminding themselves of what God has done, what God will do, and who God is.

They recognize that God has advocated for them back in Exodus in Egypt. When he parted the Red Sea, and all of Israel knew that God's name is near.
He advocated for them in David's time. Before Goliath, he struck them with just one stone. David and all of Israel knew once again that God's name is near.
So, church, how did God advocate for us? What wonders deeds, or more should I say, what wondrous deed did God do for all of us?
But God shows his love for us, that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. For the greatest deed of all was Christ's death and resurrection, who advocated to be a sacrifice for our sins.
[10:10] 1 John 2, verse 1 and 2. And by this wondrous deed, we know that God's name is near. So whatever tottering you're going through in your life, whether it's anxiety, grief, or depression, do not worry or be full of tears.

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But know and rejoice, for God's name is near to comfort you. If you're struggling with a physical pain or disability or an illness like cancer, I understand that you are in despair.
So turn to your Lord, dear Lord on high. Remember that his name is near. Rely on him, for he is always by your side.
If you see our society continue in moral decay, or your friends or family move into further disarray, do not worry or fear. But know and rejoice, for God's name is near.
If you are someone who is single, who desires to be married, or is not able to find anyone, or just someone just having trouble paying the bills, do not worry or fear.
[11:23] But know and rejoice, for God's name is near. He is faithful. Wait in him, for he will provide. If you are struggling with sin or temptation, do not let the flesh or Satan kill your joy.

But turn to the cross of your Lord, and rejoice, for God's name is near to sanctify you. For the Apostle Paul says it best in Romans 8, verses 31 and 38 and 39.
What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor heights, nor depths, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God.
In Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen. My friends, the fact that God's name is near shows that God is within grasp.
It shows that he sees and hears your cries, just how he heard Israel's cries in Exodus. And by his name, he promises all who come to him in humility, that he will wipe every tear from your eye, as Revelation 21, 4 says.
[12:46] But the nearness of God's name is also equal to his enemies as well, as we see people who are full of pride and just evil. We see a bit of a tone shift in verses 4 and 5, when God talks about the wicked.

In verse 4 he says, I say to the boastful, do not boast. To the wicked, do not lift up your horn. Do not lift up your horn on high, or speak of a haughty neck. The word horn in this verse, or in these verses, is a biblical metaphor that means strength.
According to Deuteronomy 33, verses 17, but the phrase, do not lift up your horn, culturally meant a stubborn animal who refused to submit to his caretakers, and instead would lift up his head as high as possible.
Or to be more simple, it's basically someone looking up the sky and shaking their fist at God. It's a sign of rebellion. For these people here being described are stubborn and full of pride.
And I bet many of us met someone like this, or know someone who is. Maybe you are this person. I don't know. There's probably someone in here today who's very intelligent, who thinks that you know it all, and yet you don't even consider the reasonableness of the gospel.
[14:10] But instead you mock Christ. You mock my Lord. My God. Thinking that you're too intelligent and believe in a fairy tale book. Maybe you're a co-worker of someone's, and someone probably shared with you the gospel, yet you don't accept it because you care about the things of this life, the pleasures that it offer.

Maybe you're a family member today. Hi. And in your stubbornness, you've refused to consider if you are wrong about what you believe to be true.
Maybe you're young like me and try to reason with your classmates on campus that they need Christ in a loving and gracious way. Yet they call you a bigot, saying, I can't believe in something that shares hate.
That's what they say. Maybe you're a parent here today trying to teach your kids the way of God, yet your kids don't care about God's way.
Instead, out of their stubbornness, once again, we lift the way of the world. There's one sentence that describes all those people, and that is this. Let my will be done, says the creature.
[15:30] And let God's will be damned. Is that the song of our day? Isn't that what they teach us all the time?

Well, in verse 4 and 5, we see God's anger being kindled, his fury being sparked towards such people. Just as a husband would have a rave of righteous anger, someone messes with his wife. My fellow friends who are rebellious, that's how God would be with you. You mess with this church. But yet, God shows mercy, even in his anger.

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He is rich in mercy, as he simply just warns the wicked. He warns them. He calls them to repent. And, in fact, Charles Haddon's version in his book, The Treasury of David, says this, It is a terrible thing when the anger of God smokes, but it is an infinite mercy that does not break into a devouring flame.
Such a great truth. But the slowness of God's anger will not last forever. It will become a devouring flame, as said in verse 2 of this psalm.
[16:46] For it is a fearful thing to be in the hands of a living God. For the nearness of God's name should bring fear and trembling to the rebellious soul. And if this does bring fear in your heart, good.

It should bring fear to your heart. It should cause you to turn to Jesus, not away from him. Amen. Amen. But what I find way more profound than anything else is this.
How could it be that just the nearness of God's name brings both assurance and trembling? How could it be that just the nearness of God's name brings both joy and fear?
The only way this can possibly happen is unless this name is different from any other name. Unless this name has absolute supreme rule above all things.
Well, guess what? He does have absolute supreme rule above all things. This name is different from any other name. For this name is holy, holy, holy.
[18:09] Because he is the Alpha and the Omega. He's the beginning and the ending. He's the first and the last. He's the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Lion and the Lamb.

He is our creator and we are his creation. Now, I'm going to be just, like, honest. I think that would be more than enough just to end the sermon here to be completely real with you.
But, of course, as typical human beings, you know, we like to have the last word, don't we? As we come to the next section, verses 6 through 8, as the preacher proclaims the righteous judge.
Yes. coming to verse 6, you see another shift happens.
It's kind of in a third-person view. As the psalmist, Asaph, echoes what God said previously, in the previous section, but elaborates more on the justice of God towards the wicked. And just to clarify the justice of God for everyone, so we all can be on the same page, when I say God's justice, what I'm saying is this.
[19:13] God's justice is not beyond God, meaning he's not bound by a law he has to follow. No. God is justice. It's his very nature. It's his very being. Justice starts with God and ends with God.

And then lastly, the standard that God uses to apply justice is himself, for he is perfect in every way, for he is good. Now, of all that in mind, we come to verse 6, where it says, for not from the east or from the west, and not from the wilderness comes lifting up.
Now, I will admit this verse is a tad bit confusing, because the ESV does not put a subject in the verse, but luckily, we have the NIV, the New International Version, and it says, no one from the east or from the west or from the desert can exalt themselves.
The NIV puts a subject in the verse, which is no one, and it also uses the word exalt, which literally means to lift up. And this lifting up in verse 6 is referring to promotion or honor.
Okay, that's great. What does this mean? I'm glad you asked. Well, the psalmist is saying that no true lifting up can come from our temporal, man-made efforts, but as verse 7 notes, it can only come from the true, eternal, living God.
[20:34] For it is God who chooses whom to lift up and who to put down, because he reigns. And in Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel and Luke 1, Mary's song, we get more detail about what this lifting up and putting down looks like.

1 Samuel 2, verse 6-8 reads, I'll wait. I'll wait. The Lord kills and brings to life.
He brings down the shiloh and raises up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich. He brings low and exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust. He lifts up the needy from the ash heap to make them sink with princes and inherit a scene of honor.
For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's and on them he has set the world. Then Luke 1, verses 51-53 says likewise. Likewise. Likewise. Likewise. Likewise. Likewise. Likewise. Likewise.
He has shown the strength of his arms.
[21:53] He has scattered the proud in their thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate. He has filled the hungry with good things in which he has sent away empty.

These two passages are not only showing God advocating for the weak lowly and the poor but God distributing justice with equity. And that's exactly what's happening in verse 8 of this psalm.

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Verse 8 says, For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup of foaming wine well mixed and he pours out from it and all the wicked shall drain it down to the dregs.
The cup in this verse represents God's wrath as mentioned in Isaiah 51 verse 17 and verse 22. For the people in the previous session who are proud and stubborn and rebellious in continuing their sin and loving it, God will give you that which is proper and according to verse 8 what's proper for them is God's wrath.
[23:00] In one of his essays A.W. Tozer talks about God's justice. He says this, But judgment is the application of justice to a moral situation.

It may be favorable or unfavorable. When God judges a man he brings justice to that man's life and he applies justice to the moral situation which that man's life created.
Amen. So, my fellow unbelieving friends, the preacher of this psalm, the preacher of this section proclaims that your achievements, your accomplishments, your successes, your good deeds, your lifting up among men will not earn you lifting up from God when instead you will receive judgment. Your horn will be brought low to shame for this is proper for you. Why? Because of your unbelief. Because of your continuing sin. For this is the situation you created. Nothing we can do in this life can fix our sin-inclined hearts.
[24:13] For God has prepared a well-augmented cup of his wrath for all sinners. And none can escape it. For it is the proper fate of all to continue in rebellion against God.

yet there is good news. For God offered you and I that which was not proper. Grace through his son. You see, you don't have to drink that cup.
You see, Jesus Christ advocated to drink that cup for you in your place. As Luke 22 verse 41 and 44 says, Jesus Christ the righteous, God in the flesh, offered himself to satisfy God's wrath and paid a debt for our sin which was death.
And then on the third day he rose from the dead and by his resurrection he offers the forgiveness of sins to all who believe in him and him only. So just as the preacher of this psalm proclaims the righteous judge, so will I as the preacher proclaim the righteous judge and justifier.
For God calls all men to turn away from their sins and believe on Jesus Christ. Now we come to our final section verses 9 and 10.
[25:45] The Christian rejoices in the triumph of the Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Before we get to verse 9, if you can look back to verse 1 first of the text. Verse 1 started as a corporate thanks. But verse 9 starts as an individual thanks.
Isn't that weird? If verse 1 is a collection of people thanking God that his name is near, then what is verse 9 thanking God for? but let's read verse 9 and 10 together for it says this in verse 9 i will declare it forever i will sing praises to the god of jacob all the horns of the wicked i will cut off but the horns of the righteous shall be lifted up okay so we know what asaph is thanking god for that the horns of the righteous will be cut off or lifted up and the horns of the wicked will be cut off but why would this cause him to declare forever why would this cause asaph hannah and mary to praise the god of jacob the answer seems to be in verse 10 now verse 10 is quite unique because it is the main truth of the whole psalm and what psalm 75 repeats throughout and that main truth is simply this that god will apply justice with equity i'll repeat that one more time the main truth of psalm 75 is that god will apply justice with equity so how does this display god's rule well in verse 10 it says it again all the horns of the wicked i will cut off and all the horns of the righteous shall be lifted up there's two words there will and shall those are two definite verbs of god's absolute unchallenged will meaning that whether we choose to be with god or not it doesn't really matter god's justice will be applied in the end where he's an inescapable reality and as great as that is i don't really think that really proves why asaph is thanking god though i don't think so but there is a greater theological reality in verses 9 and 10 that we must zoom out look at the psalm as a whole to see it in verses 1 through 5 we see god promising justice before his people in verses 6 through 8 we see god's justice being proclaimed before the wicked so verses 9 and 10 must be that god's justice will prevail and if god's justice prevails that mean god wins church god wins because god reigns this would make sense why asaph and hannah and mary are praising god and declaring forever this is why we ought to do the same thing yet even more so for we as believers already experienced one victory now it's the victory of jesus christ when he resurrected defeating death sin and the grave so just as the horns of asaph and hannah were lifted up so will our horns be lifted up as we enter into eternal glory praising our lord and savior forever but as hebrews 3 13 says but exhort one another

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every day as long as it is called today yes let us exhort every day reminding ourselves of the victory of jesus christ that it is finished let us declare like asaph in this psalm the victory of jesus christ before all men so that they might partake in the victory with us and then let us always rejoice rejoice rejoice in the victory of jesus christ
for what a great victory it is so i'll end with this if you are unsure that god reigns today look no further than to the cross where god's reign was on full display before everyone where he was at the cross where god used something that brought death and used it to bring life to many amen and here we are you

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