

Call to Worship from the Psalms

I will give thanks to the Lord because of his righteousness; I will sing the praises of the name of the Lord Most High.

**I will give you thanks in the great assembly; among the throngs I will praise you.**

You, God, are awesome in your sanctuary; the God of Israel **gives** power and strength to his people. Praise be to God!

**Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.**

Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.

**Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.**

Prayer of Praise

**God of change and glory, God of time and space., when we fear the future, give to us your grace. In the midst of changing ways give us still the grace to praise. Many gifts, one Spirit, one love known in many ways. In our differences is blessing, from diversity we praise one Giver, one Lord, one Spirit, one Word known in many ways, hallowing our days. For the giver, for the gifts, praise, praise, praise! Amen.**

The Word from the Old Testament

When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.

**When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against you, and when they turn back to you and give praise to your name, praying and making supplication to you in this temple.**

"Praise be to the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses." **The priests were to blow the trumpets regularly before the ark of the covenant of God. That day David first appointed his associates to give praise to the LORD in this manner: "Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done."**

Cry out, "Save us, God our Savior; gather us and deliver us from the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name, and glory in your praise. Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name." **"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who made heaven and earth!" The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the Lord.**

**Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang: "He is good; his love endures forever."**

Living the Word

*"The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.***

*Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.***

*It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth."*

So begins the 'Great Thanksgiving' – the words we use to begin our meal to remember Jesus Christ, who was sent by God to teach us how to live, how to die and how to live again. We say these words, of some similar words, in 'great thanksgiving' for God's presence in our lives. We say these words at least once a month. Yet thanks and praise should be an ongoing, moment by moment return that we give to God for all we have received.

Of course, it would be nearly impossible to be in praise for every step and every touch and every sight and every breathe. Even so, we need to be thankful for all things. God shares reminders by aweing us with moments so great that we can list them as What makes our hearts sing and our praises ring?

In the Communion words, we say 'thanks and praise.' Of course, it is a redundant repeat of the same thing...yet is it really? Pause with me for a moment and reflect: They are both responses to God and God's gifts, yet to be thankful is often expressed different than praising. Are there times when we are thankful for something, but forget to praise the giver? Thankful seems like half of the response we can give. To give thanks and praise honors the giver, and ultimately the giver of all is God.

When I went to Kansas City to take my seminary training, there were people from all over the country. I found two others, one from southern Illinois, Bumper Quick and one from Texas, Jamie Lea, who I could study with. Over the years the three of us became close friends and we still keep in contact, 20+ years later. When something extraordinary happened before us, Jamie would put his hand up and say "Thank ya, Jesus!" Now every once in a while, when I am responding in thanks and praise, I will do the Wisconsin version: "Thank you, Jesus!"

My praise for God, is often expressed a little differently, and I know some of you have heard me say: "God did that" when told the sermon was good. I have to praise God for sending the Holy Spirit to work with me every week. The inspirations aren't mine, they all come from God. Or on occasion I will confess: "If it was good it was from God, if it wasn't good it comes just from me." I depend on God walking with me every step of the way on this journey. How about you?

The next question is are your thanksgiving and praises quiet or ringing? It is Ok to share your thanks and praise quietly, yet when you share them passionately through words or song, with your heart engaged in the process, you are also ministering to all around you. In life we are quick to cry for help to our Creator God, yet, slow to publicly praise God. When we get brave we may sing out in our own church, surrounded by the church family, even so do we let our praises for God ring outside our doors?

Next Sunday we are invited by the Lutherans to come to Shues pond after worship to sing hymns of praise in celebration of 500 years since Martin Luther began reforming the church. At the bottom of the invitation is says: *"Let's wake up Northern Wisconsin with our singing!"* Still a safe crowd to praise God with, but a beginning at stepping out...Who will join me next Sunday?

In our lives there will be those who just never get this. After Jesus' resurrection, as the disciples began to tell the story of Jesus to everyone and the church was in its first stages of being. Luke wrote these words in [Acts 12:23](#) *"Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died."* During his earthy life, Herod never 'got it'.

During Jesus' ministry he healed many people. One story tells of the 10 lepers that he healed. He then told them to go to the priest to be declared clean so they could return home again. Nine of them rushed away and never returned without saying a word. [Luke 17:18](#) Jesus said: *"Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?"*

Three times this summer the story of the firey furnace has come into play. The story ends with a changed heart of the King who ordered the burn. [Daniel 3:28](#) *Then King Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the my command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. The witness of three and a king with a heart changed.*

The Bible is full of good examples to guide our lives: [Psalm 106:47](#) *"Save us, Lord our God, and gather us from the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise."* It is not a bargaining chip – save me and then I will praise you, but to trust enough to know that with God's help we can be people of praise.

This summer series has been all about opening our minds and hearts to new ways that we experience God. For me as I have shared your responses, I have found more and new ways to be thankful and filled with praise. Here is your list for What makes your praises ring?

- Happy Fun group singing – It is wonderful to begin each service with your choices each week.
- My 3 children getting along peacefully, spending time out with nature.
- Sobriety – Anyone who struggles with any kind of addiction can tell you that the only way out is to depend on a power stronger than your own. Praising God is reasonable when you finally trust God enough and hold on through recovery.
- Being in Church
- Giggles
- Our great grandson always offering help and his sisters learning to look out for others. 1 Kings 5:7

*When Hiram heard Solomon's message, he was greatly pleased and said, "Praise be to the Lord today, for he has given David a wise son to rule over this great nation."*

- Singing the Hallelujah Chorus on Easter
- Hummingbirds, bluebirds, scarlet tanagers, indigo buntings, orioles and long-legged chubby warblers
- Listening to our grandchildren (ages 5,3&1) play
- When the first red tomato appears
- Hearing the Mormon Tabernacle choir rehearse
- Watching the grandkids fish and the bobber goes down
- Hank Williams Jr: "I saw the Light!"
- Sunrises and sunsets
- Church bells ringing
- A prayer of gratitude for the beauty of God's creation
- waking up each morning and having another day to live. 1 Peter 1:3 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*
- the harmonica at the nursing home services Matthew 9:8 *When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to man.*
- dark chocolate in a large box of Lynn's goodies Deuteronomy 8:10 *When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.*
- Singing hymns – Someone gave me a page from a devotional which said this: *A reason to sing: Singing changes the brain! Some studies show that when we sing, our bodies release hormones that revive anxiety and stress. Other research indicates that when a group of people sings together, their heartbeats actually synchronize with each other.*

*In Ephesians 5:19 the apostle Paul's writing encourages the church to "speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord".*

*In Second Chronicles, chapter 20, we read a story of God's people demonstrating their trust in God by singing as they marched into battle. Enemies were heading toward the people of Judah. Alarmed, King Jehoshaphat called everyone together. He led the community in intense prayer. They didn't eat or drink, but only prayed' "[Lord,] we don't know what to do, but our eyes are on you" (vs12). The next day they set out. They weren't led by their fiercest warriors, but by their choir. They believed God's promise that they would be delivered without having to fight at all (vs17).*

*While they sang and walked toward the conflict, their enemies fought each other! By the time God's people reached the battlefield, the fighting had ended. God saved the people as they marched by faith toward the unknown, singing God's praises. God encourages us to praise God for good reasons. Whether or not we are marching into battle, praising God has power to change our thoughts, our hearts, and our lives.*

The devotional is dated Friday, June 9. That was the week after we began this series "What Makes Your Heart Sing?" We have sung 10,000 Reasons for My Heart to Sing for many weeks. The Worship Team met this week and asked if we can sing it again in a month or so. One person this week told me that they woke up singing 'that song'.

It is a song of pure praise to God. I hope you will all keep it in your mind's playlist. Isaiah 12:4 *In that day you will say: "Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted.*