

29 September 2024
19 Sunday after Pentecost

Praise to God in Union with All Hosts of Heaven

2 Kings 6:8-17
Psalm 103:17-22
Revelation 12:7-12
Matthew 18:1-6, 10

Praise is a central theme in the Bible and a vital part of our spiritual life. It is not just an act of worship but a response to God's greatness, goodness, and glory. On this 19th Sunday after Pentecost, we are called to reflect on the theme "Praise to God in union with all hosts of heaven." This theme invites us to join the heavenly beings in worshipping the Almighty, recognizing that our praise is part of a grand, eternal symphony that echoes throughout the universe. The Scripture readings for today - 2 Kings 6:8-17, Psalm 103:17-22, Revelation 12:7-12, and Matthew 18:1-6, 10 - provide us with deep insights into the nature of praise, the role of angels in worship, and the importance of faith. As we explore these passages, we will delve into the theology of praising God, the significance of joining our voices with the hosts of heaven, and how our faith is intertwined with our praise.

I. The Power of Praise in Spiritual Warfare (2 Kings 6:8-17) The story of Elisha and his servant in 2 Kings 6:8-17 is a powerful illustration of the unseen spiritual realities that surround us. When the servant saw the army of Aram surrounding the city, he was terrified. But Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see." The Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. This passage reminds us that we are never alone. Just as Elisha and his servant were surrounded by the heavenly hosts, so too are we surrounded by God's angelic army. Our praise is not just a response to what we see with our physical eyes but a declaration of faith in the unseen realities of God's kingdom. When we praise God, we align ourselves with His purposes and invite His presence and power into our circumstances.

The theology of praising God in the midst of spiritual warfare is rooted in the understanding that our battle is not against flesh and blood but against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12). Praise is a weapon that confuses the enemy and brings victory. When we praise God, we declare His sovereignty over our lives and circumstances, and we join the hosts of heaven in acknowledging His supremacy.

II. The Eternal Nature of Praise (Psalm 103:17-22) Psalm 103 is a beautiful song of praise that extols the eternal nature of God's love and His faithfulness to those who fear Him. Verses 17-22 call upon all of creation to praise the Lord, from the angels who do His bidding to all His works in every place of His dominion. This Psalm reminds us that praise is not limited to our earthly existence; it is an eternal act that transcends time and space. The angels in heaven continually praise God because they are constantly in His presence, beholding His glory. When we praise God, we join in this

eternal chorus, participating in a divine act that has no end. The importance of praising God lies in the recognition that it is our highest calling and the purpose for which we were created. Praise is not just something we do; it is who we are as God's people. As we praise Him, we fulfil our destiny and experience the fullness of life that comes from being in His presence.

Imagine a symphony orchestra where every instrument plays its part in perfect harmony. Each note contributes to a beautiful, unified sound that transcends the individual instruments. In the same way, our praise, when joined with the praise of the angels and all creation, creates a harmonious symphony that glorifies God. Our individual voices may seem small, but when combined with the hosts of heaven, they become part of a magnificent, eternal anthem.

III. The Victory of Praise in the Cosmic Battle (Revelation 12:7-12) Revelation 12:7-12 gives us a glimpse into the cosmic battle between good and evil. The archangel Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, who represents Satan, and his angels. The dragon was defeated and hurled down to earth, and the victory was declared with a loud voice in heaven, proclaiming, "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah." This passage reveals the connection between praise and victory. The heavenly beings praise God because they have witnessed His triumph over evil. Their praise is not just a response to victory; it is a declaration of God's power and the establishment of His kingdom. When we praise God, we participate in this victory, affirming our faith in His ultimate authority and the certainty of His reign. The praise of the angels in Revelation 12 also serves as a reminder that our struggles on earth are part of a larger spiritual battle. Our praise has cosmic significance, as it aligns us with God's victorious purposes and strengthens us to stand firm in our faith.

IV. The Humility and Faith of Little Children (Matthew 18:1-6, 10) In Matthew 18:1-6, Jesus teaches His disciples about the importance of humility and childlike faith. He places a child before them and says, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." He goes on to warn against causing any of these little ones who believe in Him to stumble, emphasizing the value of their faith. Jesus' teaching in this passage underscores the importance of humility and simple, trusting faith in our relationship with God. Just as children naturally trust and depend on their parents, we are called to trust and depend on our Heavenly Father. This childlike faith is essential for true praise, as it reflects a heart that is open, sincere, and fully reliant on God. Moreover, Jesus mentions that the angels of these little ones always see the face of His Father in heaven (Matthew 18:10). This statement highlights the close relationship between angels and believers, especially those who are humble and childlike in their faith. When we praise God with a humble heart, we join the angels in their worship, and our praise becomes a pure and pleasing offering to God.

Conclusion: As we conclude this reflection on "Praise to God in union with all hosts of heaven," we are reminded that our praise is a powerful, eternal, and victorious act of worship. It is through praise that we engage in spiritual warfare, align ourselves with God's purposes, and join the heavenly beings in glorifying His name. Our praise is also an expression of our faith, a faith that is humble, childlike, and fully dependent on God. May we, as the people of God, be diligent in offering our praise to Him,

recognizing that we are not alone in this act of worship. We are part of a vast, heavenly choir that continually sings the praises of our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Let us lift our voices in union with the angels and all creation, declaring the glory of God and the victory of His kingdom.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank You for the privilege of joining the hosts of heaven in praising Your holy name. We are in awe of Your greatness, goodness, and glory. Open our eyes to see the unseen realities of Your kingdom and strengthen our faith to trust in Your sovereign will. Help us to praise You in all circumstances, knowing that our praise is part of a greater, eternal symphony. May our hearts be humble and childlike, fully dependent on You, and may our lives be a reflection of Your love and grace. Comfort and encourage us as we continue our journey of faith, and may our praise bring honour to Your name. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.