

# A New People

**Psalm 149** Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, *And* His praise in the assembly of saints.

<sup>2</sup> Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

<sup>3</sup> Let them praise His name with the dance; Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp.

<sup>4</sup> For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation.

<sup>5</sup> Let the saints be joyful in glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds.

<sup>6</sup> *Let* the high praises of God *be* in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand,

<sup>7</sup> To execute vengeance on the nations, And punishments on the peoples;

<sup>8</sup> To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron;

<sup>9</sup> To execute on them the written judgment-- This honor have all His saints. Praise the LORD!

## A New Song

**Psalm 149:1** Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, *And* His praise in the assembly of saints.

One commentator speaking about this verse stated that singing the praise of the Lord "is the constant occupation of the faithful." Paul reminds us to "rejoice always." In the book of Revelation heaven is described as singing constantly before the throne of God.

There might be some who think this sounds pretty good, but most of us would probably say that sounds boring. Who wants to spend eternity singing. When we think like that of course we are missing the point.

All of these passages are not a matter of what we do with our mouths, but rather a matter of what is in our hearts. In Jeremiah 31:33 the Lord promises that He will put His word into the hearts of His people.

When people say my heart sings, they mean that some news or thing has lifted up their hearts.

His word is the new song which gives us reason to be joyful.

This new song in Psalm 149 is that hope of the forgiveness of sins and knowledge of Christ and the salvation that waits for us. This is the song that lives in the heart and that is sung by the heart even when the lips have no song in them. This song is a joy deep in the heart even when it is overshadowed by storms, clouds, sadness, depression or any other trouble. Sometimes it is very deep and is covered by a lot of clouds, but that new song is always there. Jesus is always there.

This is why Revelation describes heaven as singing constantly before the throne. Not necessarily the singing of our lips but because the clouds and the darkness will be gone from our hearts, and our hearts will sing forever before the Lord. Our hearts will be lifted up in the joy of His salvation.

It is often very hard to see Jesus' hand and His goodness in our own lives. As we talked about yesterday we sometimes feel like we are stuck in a box and we can't get out and we don't understand what is going on. It is often easier to see Jesus' power in the lives of others.

That's what All Saints Day is all about. It's not about "look at what great people they were." It's not about "look at what great things they accomplished." Its not even so much about remembering them. It is about remembering what Jesus did for them.

Our hearts sing better together. We see what Jesus did for them and are encouraged. The song Jesus put in their hearts strengthens the song He has put in ours.

**Let us pray . . .** Lord Jesus Christ we thank you for the new song which you put into the hearts of our departed loved ones and all your people. We thank you for that new song which is the forgiveness of sins, the joy of your resurrection and the hope of the life to come. We sing thanks to you that you not only gave this song to them and to us but also sustain and strengthened it, so that even when all the pressures, troubles, sufferings and sins of this world threaten to crush and destroy it, still by Your strengthen it remained in their hearts and remains in ours. We thank you that you brought them through the night of sorrow into the day of Your splendor where their hearts sing with the joy of Your salvation, unimpeded by the sorrow of this world. We pray that you would bring us also through darkness into Your light, where our hearts may one day sing with all the saints in everlasting glory. Amen

## **A New Name**

**Psalm 149:2 Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.**

In the section on the first article of the Apostle's Creed the catechism asks what might sound like a silly question, "why do we call God 'the Father'?"

The answer is because: 1. He made us. 2. He provides for and protects us. 3. We adopted children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Notice how this psalm combines all three of those into one short verse. He is our maker. He is our King who provides and protects. We are the children of Zion, adopted by faith in Christ Jesus.

It was for a long time the custom of Christians to give their children a name at their baptism. They even called it their Christian name, because it was given to them on the day they "became Christian" i.e. were baptized. When Adults were baptized, they also often received a new name.

This was a custom that went all the way back to God himself. On the day that Abram was circumcised, he and his wife were given new names: Abraham and Sarah. On the day that Jacob finally learned to trust God's promises He gave Jacob a new name:

"You shall no longer be called Jacob but Israel."

On the day that Simon confessed you are the Christ the son of the living God, he was given a new name.

"I say to you that you are Peter."

These new names indicated that they were now a part of God family, and that God was and is their true Father. They had been adopted by faith.

Just such a new name is promised to us as well:

**Revelation 2:17 And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.**

These who have gone before us have already received this new name, which we also will receive. A pledge of our adoption and of the Lord's promise to be our true Father. A father who not only provides all that we need but also holds us in his arms in all sorrow and suffering.

Let us pray . . . Heavenly Father, we thank you that you were and still are a father to our departed loved ones and all Your people. We thank You for the life You gave them and us. We thank You for food and home, health and safety, love, and all that we need. But most of all we thank You that You were their Good Shepherd, their true Father who held them tight in every distress and watch over them in every trouble. We praise You for the new name that You have given to them, and we ask that You would give to us the same. When we fall lift us up. When we cannot continue carry us. When we are lost come and find us and bring us home. Calm our troubled hearts with the knowledge that You are our true Father as You were and still are to them. Amen

## **A New Life**

**Psalm 149:5 Let the saints be joyful in glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds.**

Let them sing aloud on their beds? What are the implications of singing in the bed? What is a bed for? When you are tired. When you are sick. When you are mourning, sad or depressed. When you are nearing death. In all of these situations and many more the song remains in the hearts of God's people.

Jairus was a man who had a problem. His daughter was near death. From an earthly perspective I doubt there is any greater problem a father could have than a child who is sick and near death. He found Jesus and begged him to come and heal his daughter. Jesus came but not quickly. It is clear that Jesus didn't consider the situation to be as urgent as any father would. He stops to talk and deal with another woman as he was going to Jairus house.

If only Jairus had known the peace of God, the true power of Jesus. He would not have needed to worry that his daughter we near death.

When Jesus gets there, He speaks the truth. "She is not dead but only sleeping."

It makes no difference to Jesus if the girl was sick or dead. He has power over one just as much as the other. Sickness or death He heals them both.

These all died in the Lord, but death in the Lord is nothing except sleep. They are only sleep waiting for the resurrection and even now live with Him.

This is the song that is in our hearts when we lie on our beds, whether we are tired, or sick, or even waiting for death. Christ has power over one and the other. Death is swallowed up in victory.

Let us pray . . . Lord Jesus Christ we thank you for the victory that you have given to our departed loved ones and to all your saints. While they lived among us You were their Great Physician and now You have healed them from all disease even from death. You have given them life in Your kingdom forever more. You have accomplished this by Your power and because of Your love with which You loved us even when we were dead in trespasses and sins. Grant us to us the power of Your salvation that living we may die to sin and dying we may live in You. Heal us from every disease until the day You heal us even from death. Bring us in Your time to live with them and You forever. Amen

## **A New Victory**

**Psalm 149:6 *Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand,***

Fighting in a battle was a hard thing to do. Maybe not as much these days, but even today soldiers have to be in peak physical shape. The thick of battle is not a place where you are likely to waist time or energy singing. And so in our struggle we often may be tempted to set aside the song. When we are busy. When we are depressed. When we filled with guilt and struggle with sin. We may be tempted to set aside the song.

The other day someone told me, "I have to get my life together and then come to church." We don't fix ourselves and then come to church. We come to Christ in Word and Sacrament, and He puts the song in our hearts. He puts our life together.

The soldiers of God go forth with sword in hand and song in mouth. It is God's word and sacraments which put the song in our hearts and lifts our weary soul, which give us strength to pick up the sword and continue.

We often talk about the church in two parts, the church militant, and the church triumphant. The church triumphant are these saints and others like them who have past though the struggle with sin and Satan and rest now triumphant in heaven. The church militant are we who still struggle and often struggle hard. We struggle with temptation. We struggle with guilt. We struggle with the world.

We can not win but the victory is already ours through Christ Jesus. The fight is impossible but there they stand in glory by the power of Christ's promises.

We David who committed murder and adultery and still won by the grace of God. Saul who murdered Christians and still won by the grace of God. All these who were sinners and failed but still won by the grace of God.

Our heart sings even in the midst of battle because the victory is ours by the grace of God.

Let us pray . . . We give thanks Heavenly Father for the victory that you have given to our departed loved ones and to all Your saints through the blood of Your son Jesus Christ. We pray that as we struggle You would strengthen and up lift our hearts by the power of Your word and sacraments. Grant us victory now over sin and temptation and bring us by Your grace to the final victory and rest, that we may join all Your saints in everlasting glory. Amen