

Sermon Notes for June 16th

- Trinity Sunday - Father's Day - Peace with Justice!

Here is a little story about my dad, Okie Gardner. I received a scholarship from Reader's Digest in high school. That scholarship unlocked a lot of opportunities for me, including being able to go to Oklahoma City University. Here it is 44 years later and my father has passed, but he made sure I still get a Reader's Digest each month.

Theresa Arnold of Tioga, Texas, shares with Reader's Digest the following:

“I cleaned out Dad's closet yesterday. There were two things I couldn't box up: his work shirts and his two pair of Red Wing boots. He couldn't remember birthdays or anniversaries, but he remembered the date on which he'd bought his first pair. I remember it too - April 16, the day after Tax Day. What does a child do with her dad's favorite boots? I think I will make a planter out of them or use them to store something valuable. You can't throw away a man's favorite boots. You've got to keep them and pass them down.”

Hopefully, as we remember Dad and all the father figures in our lives who have been so important to us, we will all have BIG shoes to fill.

Our text today is Psalm 113 - it has 9 verses of wonderful praise. There are three important overviews of the Psalms I like to share. First, they run the gamut of human emotions - anger, grief, desperation, fear, awe, etc. Never think that because you don't have a so-called proper attitude and emotion, that you cannot approach God. All of the Psalms are directed to God from all the emotions. Secondly, that makes them a great way to learn about and to learn more about prayer. Finally, as all of them were to be sung, some at special times, others at extraordinary times, some at common times, think of them as the Top 150 biggest hits. When you were growing up, you remembered at least 50 different hits and all the lyrics. These songs were sung and sometimes read, over and over and over.

Psalm 113 (Voice)

Praise the Eternal!

All of you who call yourselves the children of the Eternal, come and praise His name.

Lift Him high to the high place in your hearts.

At this moment, and for all the moments yet to come,
may the Eternal's name ascend *in the hearts of His people.*

At every time and in every place—

*from the moment the sun rises to the moment the sun sets—
may the name of the Eternal be high in the hearts of His people.*

The Eternal is seated high above every nation.

His glory fills the skies.

To whom should we compare the Eternal, our God?

No one.

From His seat, high above,

He deigns to observe the earth and her *thin* skies,
stooping even to see her goings on, far beneath His feet.

He gathers up the poor from their dirt *floors*,
pulls the needy from the trash heaps,

And places them among heads of state,
seated next to the rulers of His people *where they cannot be ignored.*

Into the home of the childless bride,
He sends children who are, for her, a cause of happiness
beyond measure.
Praise the Eternal!

THIS IS THE WORD OF GOD FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD!

THANKS BE TO GOD! Amen

By way of explanation, this is a gorgeous praise hymn. It starts with Hallelujah and ends with Hallelujah. In the Hebrew it explains that above and beyond ALL TIME - from before the beginning to past eternity - God is worthy to be praised. It also explains that beyond all earthly spaces - even above heaven - God is rightly on the throne. God is beyond all of our imagination to gift us with joy. God, who is on that throne will

stoop down and gift the hideously poor with a place of honor that is equal to the greatest princes on earth. God, who is on that throne will also stoop down and gift the barren woman children. I know this is a bit sexist - but to this ancient audience - they would understand that for males - the greatest domain would be the most powerful of kingly courts; and for females - they were supposed to rule the household. In short, beyond time and space and gender, God is worthy to be praised for power and glory over all. God is the source of all joy.

So, on this Father's day, we remember the stories of our fathers, and for many of us, we were gifted with their names. So what is in a name? Well, take the word, "Hallelujah" - it means "Praise God." Psalm 113-118 were a group of praise songs that are utilized at most of the religious festivals. Combined they are called the "Hallel." Scholars think that these particular Psalms were sung by Jesus and the followers in the time between the Last Supper and the Garden of Gethsemane.

"Hallelujah" also gives us a clue to the name "Jew" derived from "Jehudah or Judah" and Mordecai in the book of Esther is the first person in the Bible referenced as a "Jew", even though by the time of Jesus, Abraham would be considered the "Father of all Jews." So the root of Jehudah or Judah is yadah. A "Jew" is a "praise-er of God."

I think as a "Christian" we have the gift of the joy of our salvation. In the name of the Father and in the name of the Son and in the name of the Holy Spirit, praise be to God.

AND THAT'S THE MESSAGE!