

Preacher: Pastor Twyla

Scripture: Psalm 150

*¹ Praise the Lord!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament!
² Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his surpassing greatness!*

*³ Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
⁴ Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
⁵ Praise him with clanging cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
⁶ Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!*

Music is a gift from God. Although not all music composed by humankind is done so with wholesome values and purposes in mind, music for a Christian is an avenue through which we can express our praise and adoration to God. It draws us closer to God. Notes are organized in a fashion to create melodies, harmonies and rhythms that seem to magically stir our souls, communicating our joys and sorrows, our hopes and needs, and, most importantly, our love for God.

Words for songs that we sing over and over again, not only extend our spirits to touch God but also to be touched by God. They open a space in our hearts and minds to know—really know—God and His Beloved Son. Music wonderfully connects us to one another, too. You can feel its energy pulling us together as we sing the great hymns like the “Lord’s Prayer” and “Great is Thy Faithfulness.”

And, while some of the contemporary Christian songs and praise songs may not be as familiar to some of us, they, too, have a spirit that can bring us together. I think it is a gift—a gift to be honored and celebrated—that we have different styles of music that reach into our uniquely created-by-God selves, initiating opportunities for all people to connect with God. I am thankful for the variety of styles of music written for worshipping God. This is a revelation of God’s pleasure with all of us and His desire for intimacy with all of us. It is God’s desire to be worshipped by all people, different as we are.

Words written like those in the Book of Psalms, in our hymnal, and in our contemporary worship pour out stories, teachings, hurts and praises that connect us with God; and they can also bring our differences into harmony as God’s beloved, fierce, and devoted church.

The scriptures celebrate and encourage the use of a variety of instruments, not just our voices; but all kinds of instruments—even cymbals. Instruments like those we use in worship—the organ, the piano, the bells, the trumpet, the tuba, even the drums—create melodies, rhythms and harmonies glorifying God. Somehow, the music they make without words reaches inside us and carries our souls to an encounter with the Holy One.

As I was thinking about this music Sunday and what I would share, I quite honestly, felt led by the Spirit to think about something more. I found myself reflecting on the idea that all of life is a song stirred into motion by the Great Conductor, God.

The rhythm of life is full of high notes and low notes, good times and not-so-good times. There are staccato notes—moments or encounters with others that are brief; and there are whole notes—those experiences that last for a longer time. There are the repeats of choruses like the traditions of our lives. And there are endings like those of a vacation or holiday experience, the choice to make changes in our lives, and yes, death. Some endings leave us feeling things are resolved and others leave us hanging and longing for more.

Even our bodies work together composing a song exclusive to who we are. The beat of our heart and the rhythm of our blood flowing and the tempo of each breath we take, creating the movements of our chest rising and falling as we inhale and exhale, the movement of our muscles and our bones, creating a change in the time signature of our heart beat and breathing, still all brought into harmony by our brain as the conductor directing the physical being of who we are. Our emotions can bring on a crescendo or decrescendo composing new paths for us to journey. Our body works together to make a beautiful song.

A day does come when this song of who we are changes and does not function in this lifetime, but the good news is God gave us a spirit so that our song never really ends. The song of who we are joins with the heavenly voices, worshipping God and at the same times continues to be sung in the hearts of loved ones.

Yes, music is a gift from God—even for those of us who feel our voices do not make a joyful noise or for those of us who don't play an instrument because all of life is a song. Not only every voice, but every life, is a glorious musical composition in God's ears. May we forever freely let the glorious unique song of our lives flow as we are directed by our Living, Loving, Almighty and Faithful Conductor. Amen.