



THE COMPASS

RED HILL LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Compass:
Encounter-Examine-Explore-Embrace God's Word
On
Your Discipleship Path

Sermon Series: "Summer Psalms."
(Pentecost, 2026)
"Joy." Text(s): *Psalms 150*.

☐ **Day #1—Monday, July 6th. Read: 150.1-2. —Encounter: God's Word and your life—What do you Hear and/or See?**
As we end this series in the book of Psalms, it is appropriate that we end with the subject and emotion of **joy**. Joy is something we want, something we seek, and something that we want to see in others as well! One way of reading Psalm 150 is to read it as a *Psalm of joy*, a joy that comes from the worship of God with one's whole being!

The Psalm opens with the common call to "*Praise the LORD!*" The Psalm instructs us *where* to praise and *how* to praise God. Our praise of God acknowledges His glory, His love, and our sheer wonder of the love that our Lord has for us! Psalm 150 gives us an illustration of how God's people praise. Biblical commentators D. Williams and L.J. Ogilvie write:

We are to come offering Him our cries and shouts of glory to His name. We are to come expressing our love, our delight, our adoration to Him. But where are we to do this? First, we are to praise God "*in His sanctuary*." This, of course, is His temple or palace in Jerusalem. The Jews went up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord down through the generations as long as the temple stood. With the coming of Jesus, however, the veil of the temple, which separated the people from the holy presence of God, was removed...today, as we gather in corporate worship, we are the living temple of God, and we are the body of Christ in ministry together. We are also to worship God "*in His mighty firmament!*"... Heaven and earth are to join together and become one in praising Him (see Ps. 148)...What is our motive to be as we come into the presence of the Lord to praise Him? First, we are to "*praise Him for His mighty acts*..." We are also to "*praise Him for His excellent greatness* [literally, "the multitude of His greatness!]" God is great, He is full of "*greatness*..." We praise God for what He has done, and we praise Him for who He is.¹

When we praise God in this way we are doing what we were created to do: Worship the Lord and Him alone! Worship expresses our created nature as God's image-bearers, recognizing and confessing that all we are and all that we have are gifts from our Heavenly Father. This is the source of true joy.

Consider/Reflect: Are you joyful? Why/why not? Ask God this week to *increase your joy*.

☐ **Day #2—Tuesday, July 7th. Read: Psalm 150.3-6. —Examine: The Text and its Message.**

The Psalm continues with describing the myriad ways that one can praise God. Commenting on Psalm 150, R. Ellsworth notes that:

The last five psalms are known as "Hallelujah Psalms" because they each begin and end with the word 'Hallelujah', which is translated "Praise the LORD." The word 'Hallelujah' is a Hebrew word which consists of 'hah-lale' and 'yah.' The former means "to boast," and the latter is a shortened form of 'Yahweh', the Hebrew name for God. It is, therefore, a call to boast in God or to give honor and praise to God. Although Psalm 150 is the shortest of these psalms, it is long on praise, using the term a total of thirteen times in its six verses.²

As this Psalm explicates, our praise of God involves all aspects of our lives. We worship corporately in God's "house" on Sunday

¹ D. Williams and L.J. Ogilvie. *Psalms 73-150* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1989).

² R. Ellsworth. *Opening up Psalms* (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006).

mornings, being served by God through His Word and Sacraments. We praise God through our work, dedicating all we do to God's glory. Our relationships can reflect our grateful praise to God as well, acknowledging His good gifts in our lives. In this Psalm, Jewish, Temple worship is in view, describing the instruments used in Jewish worship.

Every section of the orchestra—horns, strings, pipes, percussion—is invited to join in a symphony of praise...toward the proclamation of God's sovereignty...it is significant that elsewhere the sound of the trumpet announces God's reign (see Pss 47:5-7; 98:6)...the only thing that can suppress the praise of the full Temple orchestra: the uplifted voice of every creature!³

Consider/Reflect: “A tenfold “hallelujah!” in the heavens and in the place of worship, with every musical instrument; everything that breathes should praise the Lord because of His mighty deeds and His “excellent greatness”! Of the many reasons to praise God, for us the most joyous are “His mighty deeds” (v 2) by which He has redeemed us in Christ and brought us to faith. [Pray]: O Lord, may the praises in the Psalms, the praises in the Church, and the praises in heaven equip me to join in praising You! Amen.”⁴

□ **Day #3—Wednesday, July 8th. Read: Again: Psalm 150.3-6. –Explore: The background to this text(s).**

Again, the Psalm describes the myriad of ways that we can praise God. There is literally nothing that cannot be a means of praise if we see every aspect of our lives as being both under the authority of God as well as from the hand of God. The methods mentioned in the Psalm reflect the culture of the psalmist.

The psalmist offers us the means of our praise. In doing this he describes the ancient musical instruments of Israel. God is to be praised with the “*sound of the trumpet*” (the ram’s horn, used for signaling), the “*lute*” (a several-stringed instrument with a sound chamber), the “*harp*,” the “*timbrel*” (a woman’s instrument used in dance), “*stringed instruments*,” “*flutes*,” “*loud cymbals*,” and “*clashing cymbals*” (types of percussion instruments). God is to be praised by a symphony of sound (vv. 3–5). Today we could legitimately add our own musical instruments to the list...Everything that evokes praise or expresses praise is a legitimate instrument of praise and therefore relevant for the culture and the people using it.⁵

The Psalm concludes where it began; with an exhortation to praise the Lord! Again, when we express our praise to God, we are acknowledging His Lordship, love, sovereignty, and care over our lives—and this brings us joy! The very breath God gives us becomes the means through which we praise God for life—all of life!

“*Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.*” The animals have breath; they are to praise the Lord. The birds have breath; they are to praise the Lord. Humans have breath; they are to praise the Lord. This is the purpose of breath—the spirit (*ruah*) which God breathed into us (Gen. 2:7). We are to breathe it back to Him in praise as we offer the essence of our life up to Him. Indeed, as the psalm ends, “*Praise the LORD!*”⁶

Consider/Reflect: One method of praying is using a form of prayer called a “breath prayer.” We take a prayer request, praise, or Bible verse, inhaling as we say one part of the prayer, then exhaling as we say the final part. For example, breathe in as you say, “Lord Jesus Christ,” then release the breath saying “have mercy on me.” Another is, “Jesus, remember me” (inhale), “when you come into your kingdom” (exhale). Try this today or later this week.

□ **Day #4--Thursday, July 9th. Read: Luke 15.1-2.— Explore: The background to this text(s).**

The joy that we experience when we worship and acknowledge God’s sovereignty, is also a theme found in the Gospel of Luke. In our Lucan text, the joy experienced and expressed is now on *God’s side—in Heaven!* Think about that: God and the Angels (all of Heaven) experience joy when someone repents *after they have been found!* Not only does God go after the lost, He is joyful when they quit running!

In Luke 15, we are told that four “groups” have come to hear Jesus: Tax Collectors and “sinners,” and the Pharisees and Scribes. What we have here are really two *opposite* groups on the social spectrum: the “good” and the “bad.” The term, “sinners,” likely reflects a broad range of those whom the religious establishment believed to be outside the love and mercy of God; from Gentiles to prostitutes; from the physically sick to the “unclean.” The Tax Collectors are self-explanatory! What upset the Pharisees and Scribes was Jesus’ practice of *table fellowship* and the welcoming of those that the religious establishment believed were not worthy of God’s attention, love, and mercy.

3 *The New Interpreter’s Bible.* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996).

4 *The Lutheran Study Bible* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009).

5 Williams, Ogilvie, *Psalms*.

6 *Ibid.*

The tax collectors and “sinners”...are “the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame” of 14:21. The two groups are found together in 5:30 and 7:34....[w]ere all gathering. Note the hyperbolic use of “all.” The periphrastic (literally *were ... nearing*) indicates that this was a habitual experience in Jesus’ ministry...This man welcomes sinners and eats with them...The OT warnings not to associate with sinful people were no doubt applied to Jesus’ association with tax collectors and sinners. Yet Jesus associated with such people to offer them salvation through repentance and faith, not to participate in their sin.⁷

No person is outside of God’s love and grace—this is what makes grace, grace! Originally, God made a covenant with Abraham to create a people (Israel) who were to be holy as God is holy. The Law, the Torah, was the description of that covenantal relationship and holy living. When God’s people obeyed the covenant (were holy), they would be a “light to the nations.” However, as Saint Paul would later argue, the Jewish Law had become an impediment to Israel’s vocation to be a “light unto the nations.” Ultimately, it would be through Jesus that the true meaning and intention of the Law would be fulfilled.

God is committed to finding the lost, as this chapter explains. Jesus deals with the contrast between this divine attitude and the temptation among many believers to ignore the lost. Jesus once again chooses the scribes and Pharisees as the foil for his comparison. They cannot believe that he is spending so much time receiving sinners and eating with them. Such table fellowship represents an absence of the separation they think righteousness demands. Jesus argues, however, that the call of God demands time be spent seeking the lost⁸

Consider/Reflect: “God found us when we were far from Him. We are in no position to begrudge His grace similarly given to others, no matter how unworthy they appear to us. How meagerly we celebrate Baptism and public declarations of faith! God calls us to a joyful celebration, not only of our own salvation, but also for the salvation of our brothers and sisters. [Pray]: Father, as You welcome me, grant me joy in welcoming others. Amen.”⁹

□ **Day #5— Friday, July 10th. Read: Luke 15.3-7.—Explore: The background to this text(s).**

The frustration of the Scribes and Pharisees concerning Jesus’ eating and socializing with these “sinners,” leads Jesus to tell three parables (our focus is on the first two). All of the parables describe something (someone) being lost and then being found, and then the consequent *joy of the one* finding what (who) was lost.

In the first parable, Jesus tells the story of a shepherd who goes in search of a lost sheep, leaving 99 other sheep. Again, the focus is on the shepherd who goes looking, and the joy when that *one sheep* is found!

The Parable of the Lost Sheep teaches that there is...rejoicing in heaven when a sinner...repents. Jesus was not saying the other 99 sheep were not important. Instead, He was emphasizing that the one sheep not in the fold corresponded with the sinners with whom Jesus was eating (vv. 1–2). The 99 righteous persons refer to the Pharisees who *thought* themselves righteous and therefore in no need to repent.¹⁰

The lost sheep represents the sinner, while God, the Son, is the shepherd (cf Ps 23; Is 40:11). The found sheep is every Christian, rescued and delivered by God. The neighbors are the saints and angels who rejoice together...The emphasis is not on neglecting the flock, but on seeking the lost. (A shepherd typically watched 30–40 sheep, so Jesus’ account likely implies the presence of one or two helpers)...The lost sheep is carried home in safety with triumph and celebration. Shepherds often brought the flock home to the village at the end of the day, though not always...[there is]...rejoicing in heaven is over those whom the shepherd has found...The self-righteous imagine that they need no repentance. Before we are found by the Gospel, the Law must show we are hopelessly lost.¹¹

A further aspect that we can understand from these parables reveals *how* people (you and I) get lost. Often, sheep get lost because of foolishness. Sheep have a tendency to wander away. It was not unusual for sheep to get lost as they ate. As the sheep grazed with their heads down, they would just keep eating and walking, hence the need for a watchful shepherd! Conversely, as we will see in the parable of the lost coin, a coin cannot lose itself! It is “lost” by the owner. In our lives we sometimes are foolish, like sheep, and we “wander away” from God on our own, we take our eyes off of God. Sometimes, other people’s choices hurt us and/or impact us and we feel “lost” and alone. In either circumstance, it is *a joy* to know that God *looks for us* and will *find us!*

7 R.H. Stein. *Luke* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992).
8 *NIV Application Commentary: Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996).
9 *The Lutheran Study Bible*.
10 J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1985).
11 *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

Consider/Reflect: “In the first of three similar parables, Jesus uses the devotion of a shepherd to illustrate God’s willingness to find the wayward sinner. God does not abandon us to our foolishness but seeks us out, calling us to repentance and to faith in the Gospel. [Pray]: Bring us home, dear Lord, and let there be joy in heaven. Grant us daily repentance. Amen.”¹²

□ **Day #6-Saturday, July 11th. Read: Luke 15.8-10.—Embrace: God and His guiding you through His Word.**

In the second parable, Jesus now describes a scene in which a valuable coin was lost. The coin was a *drachma*, “a Greek silver coin referred to only here in the New Testament, equaling about a day’s wages. The point would have been clear to Jesus’ listeners: the sinners with whom He was associating were extremely valuable to God. (Cf. similar wording in vv. 6, 9.)”¹³ The parable of the lost coin (and the lost sheep) also reveals to us our inability to find *our way back*; someone has to come and *find us*! In other words, we do not “find” God; God finds us!

In the second parable, the repentant sinner is like a coin. Unlike the wandering sheep, the coin is inanimate, emphasizing its complete helplessness. The neighbors represent the angels, who are invited to share the joy of God, for He has found something precious...The value of such a coin, a day’s wages, was once equivalent to the price of a sheep...[The woman lights a lamp]...A typical house was dark even in daytime, having few or no windows. Christ, the light of the world, seeks out the lost.¹⁴

Again, the result of both parables was the lost being found and the joy of the one who finds what (who) was lost! Jesus tells us that God *rejoices* when we are found! What an incredible truth and assurance! The lost can be those who were never followers of Jesus to begin with, as well as those disciples who “wander away” or experience seasons of loneliness, alienation, and/or feeling simply “lost.”

These parables also point to the ministry of the church. God uses His church (you and me), to reach a lost and lonely world with His love, mercy, and forgiveness. As long as the church exists, God is still “looking” for the lost!

These parables are among the simplest stories of Jesus, communicating both truth and emotion. God wants servants who understand his heart to restore sinners. In both cases, the search takes work. In both cases what is searched for seems, on the surface, to be a modest object. In fact, the search becomes a priority. Yet in both cases, the recovery of what was lost leads to rejoicing with others. This imagery underscores God’s desire for disciples to share the goal of winning the lost back to him. Note that the focus is on the joy at the recovery of a sinner, not on the fact that Jesus is the only one to do it. That is why the parable begins, “Suppose one of you...” By telling the story this way, the listener is brought into the story as the shepherd. Jesus is training other disciples after him to do as he has been doing.¹⁵

Consider/Reflect: “The unrepentant sinner is like a coin lost in the darkness. Once lost, we have no more ability to find the Lord than the coin has to find its owner. Yet, the good news of Christ gives “light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death” (1:79). [Pray]: Thank You, merciful Lord, for seeking us when we had no power to seek You. Amen.”¹⁶

Pray and Prepare for Worship Tomorrow...

New Sermon Series Begins: “The Parables.”

Scripture Texts:

Isaiah 55.10-13

Romans 8.12-17

Matthew 13.1-9, 18-23

12 Ibid.

13 Walvoord, et al, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*.

14 *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

15 *NIV Application Commentary: Luke*.

16 *The Lutheran Study Bible*.