

January 1, 2017  
Sermon for New Year's Day  
St Peter Lutheran Church  
Bowie, TX  
Larry Knobloch, Pastor  
Psalm 29

*J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus*

Psalm 29 (ESV)

A Psalm of David.

<sup>1</sup> Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. <sup>2</sup> Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness. <sup>3</sup> The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over many waters. <sup>4</sup> The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. <sup>5</sup> The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon. <sup>6</sup> He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox. <sup>7</sup> The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire. <sup>8</sup> The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. <sup>9</sup> The voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth and strips the forests bare, and in his temple all cry, "Glory!" <sup>10</sup> The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forever. <sup>11</sup> May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior,  
Jesus Christ!

Amen.

Jim O'Neill was flying from Glasgow, Scotland to Colchester, England when his vision failed. Initially he thought he had been blinded by the sun but soon O'Neill realized it was much worse.

He had suffered a stroke. It gave new meaning to the expression, "flying blind."

O'Neill groped around, found the radio and issued a Mayday alert. Paul Gerrard of the Royal Air Force quickly took off and finding O'Neill he began talking to the blind pilot. "Keep coming down... A gentle right turn...Left a bit...Go right now."

Gerrard hovered within five-hundred feet, guiding him to the nearest runway.

O'Neill would have to land the plane by faith and not by sight. On his first try he hit the runway and bounced up again. Gerrard continued to speak calming words of assurance and hope.

Finally on the eighth try the blinded pilot managed to make a near-perfect landing.

We've all been struck and felt like we were flying blind, perhaps not with a stroke, but with a divorce, an overwhelming expense, a cancer-ridden body. Whether you or a loved one, maybe not midair, but midcareer, mid-semester or midlife. If you lose sight of any safe landing strip, you've probably issued our fair share of mayday prayers.

And, as we look into the New Year with fleeting hope, we may feel like, we're flying blind. This morning, we are privileged to hear the one voice that matters—the voice of God, who can guide us His safe landing strip.

In Psalm 29 the LORD's voice appears seven times. Seven times.

Get it? Seven is the perfect number. This is the perfect voice! And just in case we lose sight of whose voice this is, the LORD's name appears eighteen times in Psalm 29; as if to say that this God, and no other, speaks. He speaks with power and He speaks with peace.

Unlike the pilot, Jim O'Neill, many voices clamor for our attention.

Talk show hosts of the day say not to worry. The financial advisor says buy now. Your friend says read this book. And then we add our own voice asking, “What’s the use?”

The end result is that we miss the runway...we crash and burn and it gets ugly— really, really ugly.

So listen to what David writes in this Psalm, *“The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over many waters.”*

These words take us back to Genesis 1:2 where God’s Spirit hovers over the face of the waters. And then He speaks in Genesis 1:3, *“Let there be light”* and there was light.

David wants to assure us that God’s voice has authority and power—creational authority and power! He continues.

In Psalm 29:5–9 we can almost hear God’s voice in Dolby stereo surround sound; we can almost feel the bass shaking like of divine thunder!

***“The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon. <sup>6</sup> He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox. <sup>7</sup> The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire. <sup>8</sup> The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.”***

The image is of a powerful thunderstorm that comes across the Mediterranean Sea and slams into Lebanon. It becomes a whirlwind that passes through Lebanon’s mountains, shearing its strong, colossal cedars—snapping them like toothpicks. These trees stand 130 feet tall and the trunks are about 25 feet around, and the voice of the LORD destroys them. It blasts them, breaks them to pieces and shatters them.

It kind of like the LORD revs up His celestial weed eater and goes through the forests, plowing down all the trees. We could easily imagine that there are lightning bolts on every side that light up the sky. Some of you may remember thunderstorms like that. *“He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and Sirion like a young wild ox.”*

Sirion is the Phoenician name for Mt. Hermon; this mighty mountain shakes at God's voice.

So it is an earthquake, going off the Richter scale!

Then the storm lays low the wilderness of Kadesh. The silent solitude of the wilderness, which normally lies in infinite stillness, is shaken when the LORD makes His awe-inspiring and majestic voice resound there.

The storm continues. God enters into the inhabited realms and he causes a deer to give birth prematurely and then strips the forests bare.

The final catastrophe is a great flood that covers the earth. It is a deluge that inundates the landscape, and the only thing that survives is God's throne. He is King over the flood.

He is King of creation!                      Talk about a powerful voice!

Another Hebrew author Isaiah says that it endures forever, that it accomplishes that for which God sends it.

His voice is more powerful than armies, treaties, chariots, horses, as well as every other human might.

His voice hovers over baptismal waters, giving new life.

His voice cleanses people from sin and sets the prisoners free.

His voice speaks over bread and wine so that with bread and wine people receive Christ's true body and blood.

When we are flying at 10,000 feet, with no clue as to where we are going, His voice breaks into our chaos, frustration and pain. It assures us that the LORD is in control. He is in charge in heaven and on the earth.                      He has the power!

But there is more. Psalm 29 ends with these words, "*May the LORD give strength to his people! May the LORD bless his people with peace.*"

After the storms, calamities, catastrophes, explosions, and deluges, we hear God's last Word and it is a word of Peace.

Peace does not appear in a windstorm or a whirlwind.

It does not come in the roll of thunder or the rumblings of a seismic earthquake.

The voice of peace is tangible and concrete alright—just like the power—but it comes in the cry of a little baby. But this is no ordinary baby cradled in Mary's arms.

He saw the first ray of sunlight and heard the first crash of a wave. "He is God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made."

Wonder of wonders, in Bethlehem the Artist of creation became the paint on His own palette. The Potter became clay on His own wheel.

God became an embryo in the body of a village girl and His earthly family had no savings account or connections with the right kind of people.

Jesus, the Maker of the universe, the one who spoke it all into existence, was born into a family too poor to swing a bed for a pregnant mother.

How low could He go?

One Friday, the one we call "good", He allowed soldiers to march Him along the *Via Dolorosa*, the way of sorrows, while He shouldered His crossbar with blood dripping from His butchered back.

He allowed his executioners to strip Him naked, shove Him to the ground, and pin Him to wood with their tools of torture. And Jesus absorbed the spit and the insults without asking His Father to dispense twelve legions of angels.

Can you hear His voice from the cross?

*"Father forgive them for they know not what they do."*

*"Today you will be with me in paradise."*

*"It is finished!"*

Here God gives strength to His people.

Here the LORD blesses His people with peace.

But the LORD does more than speak peace—He delivers it for you at this altar in the broken body and shed blood of Jesus.

The entire experience at the communion altar is one of peace.

After the consecration of the elements the pastor says, “The peace of the Lord be with you.”

The congregation then sings the Agnus Dei which includes the words, “O Christ, thou Lamb of God, who takest away the sin of the world, grant us Thy peace.”

After we taste and see that our Lord is good, we sing the Nunc Dimittis or Simeon’s Song, “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.”

And the last word spoken is from the Aaronic benediction where the LORD gives to us His peace. “The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift His countenance upon you and give you peace.”

God speaks with power. With authority He commands, “I’m in charge here and I shall help you. You can count on it!”

God speaks with peace. With tenderness He comforts, like the guiding pilot...  
“Keep coming down. A gentle right turn. Left a bit. Go right now.”

With this voice guiding us we land safely in His loving arms tonight and eternally in His kingdom forever.

And so we shout with all the faithful, “Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth!”

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and mind through Christ Jesus!

Amen.

## **Sermon Outline**

### ***A VOICE OF POWER AND PEACE***

#### ***Psalm 29***

- I. Are you flying blind?
- II. God's voice has authority and power.
- III. The LORD does more than speak peace—He delivers it for you.

BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR, KING OF CREATION

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