

# The Final Song (Psalm 150)

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     going to read Psalm 150 and then I'll pass it over to Isaac. So please open your Bibles if you can to Psalm 150. Psalm 150 and it says this, this is God's word. Praise the Lord. Praise God in the sanctuary. Praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power. Praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet. Praise him with the harp and lyre.

Praise him with tambourine and dancing. Praise him with the strings and flute. Praise him with the clash of cymbals. Praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord. This is God's word. Over to you. Cool. Thank you, William. Should we just quickly pray once again before we just look at God's word together? Heavenly Father, you are great. You are Lord. Teach us today as we open your word what it means to praise you. Teach us to see you as more precious and more worthy than anything else in this world. Forgive us when we fall short and when we hold other things in high regards. May your glory be the only thing that is lifted up here today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Just to preface, I've got a little bit of a cough, so I might sip water. But I got a COVID test and they actually gave, they sent two negative tests back to me. But negative times negative is positive. So I don't really know what that means. But yeah, Psalm 150. I don't know if you know anyone with a type of personality like a firework. It's not the Katy Perry song, but someone who kind of lights up and fizzles and explodes and goes out with a bang. And I have to admit I'm like that sometimes. I get really absorbed into one thing and I try to learn everything there is about it, right? Collect every single Pokemon card or read through the entire series of books in a week or buy seven broken motorcycles and then I don't fix a single one. Or you go through movies like Mighty Cyrus, back to back, who funnily actually enough has one called The Last Song. And that's what we're looking at today, the final song.

And for that span of time when you're absorbed into this thing, it becomes the object of your attention, right? For days or for weeks or for years. You're absorbed into it and you give it your efforts and yeah, your attentions. You give it your praise. I know a few of you guys really love Blackpink or Korean CEOs or you like an internet celebrity or different materials or even money and these are good things. It's definitely enjoyable in the moment, but when that passes, what are you left with, right? You've spent time and you've spent effort and at the end of your journey, you've built something that doesn't last. It doesn't matter. You can't keep it. And these things that we praise, it can't carry the weight of our adoration, of our attention. But then we realise that that's kind of the human condition, isn't it? We tend to lift up our own desires and focus on praising ourselves.

[ 3 : 5 3 ]     And now I believe that this psalm, our final song, can help us to sing a slightly different tune. Psalm 150, I think, encourages us to reset and take the spotlight off ourselves for just a second, to remove ourselves from the centre of this make-believe world where we reign as king.

And looking back at the psalm, when I first read through it, nothing really jumped out at me, right? It's kind of like, you know, when your mum tells you to wash the dishes over and over and over again and you forget about every single time, it loses its impact. And as I read it, I just saw praise, praise, praise, praise, praise, praise, praise. But I think taking a little bit of a closer look at this psalm shows us the recipe for amazing life of praise, okay? So today we're just going to look at a couple of things. We're going to look at where we praise, why we praise, how we praise, and who we praise, okay? So where, why, how, and who, okay? And so let's just kick it off with one, okay? Verse one. It tells us to praise the Lord in the sanctuary, okay? So the sanctuary was, back in the olden times, the Israelites used to worship where there was the tabernacle, right?

And then later on, they used to worship in this place called the temple. And worship at the temple was a really crazy, it was a glorious thing, right? So in 2 Chronicles, it says this, the priests withdrew from the holy place. All the priests who were there had consecrated themselves, regardless of their division. All the Levites who were musicians, Asaph, Heman, Juduthan, and their sons and relatives stood on the east side of the altar, all right? And this is what they did.

They were dressed in fine linen. They were playing cymbals, harps, and lyres. They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets. The trumpeteers and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise of the Lord and sang, He is good, His love endures forever.

Then the temple of the Lord was filled with the cloud, and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the temple of God, okay? So, I mean, back then they had 120 musicians. We have four, but it doesn't mean that we're 30 times less, okay?

[ 6 : 22 ] But yeah, back then it was a really, really special thing, okay? The temple of the Lord was filled with glory, so much so that the priests couldn't perform other things. They couldn't do other things, okay? So, not only here on earth and not only back then, we are joined in praise to Him in His mighty heavens, okay? So, not just here on earth and here in church, here in Auckland do we praise. In the sanctuary, the church, we also praise, there are also beings up in the heavens praising the Lord, okay?

Heavenly beings of wings surround the temple and they cry out, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty. The whole earth is full of His glory, okay? So, Psalm 150 tells us to praise in the Lord's sanctuary, in the Lord's temple, all right, here at church. But what about why, you know? Why should we praise, okay? So, I wonder how many of us remember William's take-home point from two weeks ago. I mean, last week is hard enough, but what about two weeks ago? Do you remember? It was about remembering, actually.

It was about recalling the things that God has done for us in the past. Remembering God's grace and His fatherly love and His universal rule, okay? So, verse two tells us to praise Him for His power and His surpassing greatness, okay? So, the psalmist here gives us two enormous reasons, okay? When you're stuck sometimes and things aren't going so well, when life isn't where you want it to be, think back to these two reasons that you can praise God for, and these two reasons don't change.

His power and His greatness, okay? His acts of power talks about what God has done, all right? The things that He has done for you, the things that He has done for your family, maybe for your friends. You can think back to the things that God has done throughout the Bible, all right? His miracles and His great acts of power. If you find that difficult, I remember during this time, this period in my life, I wrote down every day three things that I could be thankful for every single day, right? And it's not always just God's power doing great things, doing massive things in your life, but God's great power can also do very small things in your life, but these small things matter as well. So, take the time, take the effort to think about some of the small things that God has done, all big things with His great power, okay?

And His surpassing greatness. So, the power is what God has done in your life, but His greatness is His character, okay? The second point instructs us to praise God for who He is, not just for what He has done, okay? For His love and His mercy, His justice and His compassion, right? His wisdom, His tenderness, His faithfulness. I could go on and on, His righteousness, right? But in order to find out who God is, in order to praise Him for that, you have to find out who God is, right? You can't sing the praises, you can't adore something that you have no idea of, right? So, I encourage you to jump into His Word. Discover for yourself, and it's different for everyone, you know? Some of the things that you might really resonate with, I might have only experienced a very little bit of it. Find out who God is to you, and sing those praises to Him, right? Really discover God's character, and you'll find out that it naturally turns into praise. You know when you find, like, the most bomb eggs, Benedict, or you find a Netflix series that you absolutely have to watch, right? Right? Whether it's Korean drama, or it's TVB, right? You naturally just tell everyone about it. Oh, you have to watch this.

[10:18] You have to eat here. This coffee is amazing, right? When you find out more about this one thing, and you really experience it for yourself, you have no choice but to tell it, to tell other people, to sing its praises, right? God is more bomb than runny eggs or bingeable television could ever be, right? So sing of His power, the things that He has done, and His greatness, His character.

Discover both, and praise Him comprehensively, right? And thirdly, how? Praise Him with everything. So this is the longest part, right? Verse 3 to 5. Praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet. Praise Him with the harp and the lyre. Praise Him with timbrel and dancing, with strings and pipe. Praise Him with the clash of cymbals. Praise Him with resounding cymbals, right? And it just seems like the psalmist here just lists a very basic orchestra. I mean, how many of these do you know? The trumpet, the horn, like, what's a lyre? There's small cymbals, and there's resounding cymbals. There's dancing, there's strings.

The psalmist, I think, is getting a little bit deeper than just the list of instruments that Jaden probably knows how to play. So each of these uses a slightly different part of our body.

The trumpet and the horn and the flute, they all require breath. The lyre, that's actually like a little small stringed instruments you've seen in Hercules, you know, the Disney movie. It's like a little U. And the strings, they need our fingers. I'm sorry. My breath. The cymbals and dancing, they need coordination and a willingness to be embarrassed, especially if you dance like me. So praise should be soft and gentle. Little fluffy angels or flutes and lyres. But it should also be loud and passionate, right? The clash of cymbals, the resounding cymbals. I think it's good a reminder to not only praise with everything, but a reminder that praise comes in many different ways, okay? Be careful not to judge others for dancing when you're just gently blowing on the flute, or ridicule a gentle string player when you're trumpeting away. Remember that here at PCBC, we have a lot of different people, but we all have very legit expressions of praising God. And I think all of this is just to remember and to thank God that

He accepts praise of every kind whenever and however we offer it. So this extends into our day-to-day. With your breath and the words to say, are these things pleasing to God? Are these praises to Him? Do they bring genuine love and care to those around you? Are your thoughts pleasing to Him? Your actions, right? In your workplace, in your schools, at home, with your friends, sitting in traffic or going for a run? What can we use around us to praise the Lord? So I think with how, God is to be praised resourcefully with everything. So remember how, we'll park who aside for a little bit. Remember how in the beginning of the Psalms in book one, Psalm 1 instructed us to delight in the word of the Lord and to meditate on His law day and night. So the psalmist kicks off this last psalm in contrast with a hallelujah, praise the Lord, right? So all throughout the psalm, I think this has been building and building in crescendo through pain and pressure, pleasure, through suffering and success, through valleys and through victories. The psalms have been lifting us heavenward to the peak of God's glory and everything eventually ends in praise. So all 13 lines, all six verses of this psalm, point us in the direction of praise. But this is only half of the story. So remember how the psalms were originally written for the Israelites to sing with each other, okay? So Psalm 150 is actually part of a five-part psalm. So 146, 147, 8, 9, and 150, that all point towards praise. So this is what the Israelites sang together when they were congregated. They thought back on the things that God has done for them, right? All the trials and all the tribulations that He has led them through. They've thanked the God who has delivered them from the hands of the Pharaoh, right? Who took them into the promised land, who took down the walls of Jericho without a single sword being lifted.

[ 15 : 17 ] These were the acts of power and of surpassing greatness that the Israelites remembered as they praised. But what does that mean for us here today, right? When you look at an old picture, who do you think that is? We only see a part of the story, right? That's Rachel and Ian, actually.

Which one is which, though? We only see a part of the story, right? We see what the intention was, right? We see things there, but we feel like it's not complete, okay? So for us that live on this side of the gospel, right, after the death and the resurrection of Jesus, we can experience praise in a depth that the Israelites could only have dreamed of, okay? The person of Jesus is the crowning glory, right? The greatest thing, the greatest thing that God has achieved. There is no act of power, nothing that surpasses the greatness of Him. So as we look at this psalm in colour, right, we see a lot more, right? We see that Ian used to wear pink and purple. We see that Rachel's red cheeks haven't really changed all that much, right? And we get to experience almost 3D-ness of a 2D thing.

And when we look at this psalm in the same way, on this side of the gospel, after the death and resurrection of Jesus, it doesn't take away from the original meaning, but I think it gives us a slight different dimension of colour and makes you wonder if this was what praise was always meant to be like, okay? So when we look back at the where, back in the old days of the Old Testament, like we said, it was everywhere. The temple of the Lord, sorry, the temple of the Lord was where they worshipped, okay? But now, in the New Testament, where we live, Jesus says in John 14, but the advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you, okay? So what is this thing? What is the Holy Spirit, okay? In Corinthians, we see also as well, do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him, for God's temple is holy and you are that temple, okay? It starts to unpack a little bit more about what the new temple is.

First Peter says, you are like living stones, right? You're being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. So for those of us who have accepted Jesus, the Holy Spirit dwells in us and we are now that temple, right? So we no longer have to be at a specific place. We don't have to be at a church, we don't have to be in the sanctuary, near the tabernacle to be able to worship, right? We can worship wherever we are.

Jesus has paid the price to be the perfect sacrifice in order for us to come before God at any point in time, anywhere we are, right? Whether we're in church, whether we're alone or with others, we who have accepted Jesus are part of this living temple, okay? So what does your personal picture of praise look like? Can you praise anywhere or do you have to be standing here, 209 Tirakao Drive, right, with the blue chairs that are slightly gross but quite comfortable, right? With all the people next to you drowning out your voice because you don't really like the way you sing, right? Can you only do it here or can you do it anywhere, everywhere? Learn to draw a picture of praise in your personal life, okay? Maybe it is writing things down, right? Maybe it is sharing with each other, right? Giving thanks and counting our blessings. And why? The praise him for his acts of power, praise him for his surpassing greatness. So much like the Israelites remembered what God has done to rescue them, we can look back at our perfect saviour, our ultimate saviour, Jesus, who has rescued us, rescued us from death, from the bondage of sin. And not only that, he has reconciled us to our heavenly father through his sacrifice.

[ 19 : 56 ] So Ephesians 5 tells us, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God, we were once in darkness but now we are in the light of the Lord, live as children of light, okay? We can praise Jesus for what he has done to us, done for us to bring us out of darkness and into light, right? And to remember this fact and praise him because of it is a reason why we can praise, right? There was a popular song in 1918 written that we still sing today and it's called Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus. Turn, and the chorus we still sing, it says this, turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, and the things of this earth will go strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace, okay? So have you ever experienced anything like this when a relationship or a person is just so much better than the things, right, of this earth, right? Just before the pandemic happened,

I was lucky enough to travel to Vietnam with family and friends and the first night that we got there, we made it into the accommodation, we were so excited to pick out our rooms and to maybe go out and do all these things and it was quite dark and all of a sudden, like we just got into the Airbnb and someone walked down the stairs and I think my first thought was like panic because I hadn't even been in Vietnam for like 24 hours and someone was already coming to rob us, but I looked closer and it turned out to be Ian, right? So he had actually flown from London to surprise us, to surprise me, um, and just for that moment, right, how much better it was seeing someone that I knew, seeing someone that I loved, um, rather than the fancy accommodation or the, even the excitement of going out and experiencing these things. Now Ian is no Jesus, but I hope that you all have people, um, in your life that you hold more dear than possessions, right? No amount of money could tear you away from them, right? Is Jesus that to you, right? Do you love the, do you love the giver more than the gifts that he gives? Do you love the one who blesses rather than the blessings itself? So how much better it is to, to remember the love and the grace of our Lord Jesus and to praise him for that rather than the things of this world. And perhaps you're new here and perhaps, um, you're not a Christian. You've only been to church a few times and you kind of wonder, oh, is this, um, yeah, is this guy who died kind of 2,000 years ago, is he really worth it? Um, Matthew 13 talks of, um, one of the parables, one of the stories like this. He says, again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it, right? So I encourage you if maybe you're new here, um, is it worth looking at this or looking for this pearl of great price, right? Do you have this thing in your life that you'd be able to give everything, right? You sell everything in your life just to obtain it. A few of my friends and family, they're doing this puzzle. I'm doing puzzles at the moment. I don't know why it's such an in thing. Um, but I kind of think of it like this, you know, if you have a puzzle, there's a thousand pieces, right? 999 are there and you're missing that one little piece. It's incomplete, right? Or even worse, if your puzzle is a thousand pieces and you've only got one piece, you're missing 999, right? What can you do with that? For me personally, like I shared earlier, um, I think this journey of praise and this worship really brought me, um, into the starters relationship with Christ. Um, without praise and without worship,

I was just a one puzzle piece in a box of 1,000, right? Jesus has completed and is the reason for my living, of my being, right? And I encourage you, if maybe you just want to know a little bit more, um, come to talk to myself or William or with your subgroup leaders and find out why we believe the saviour, uh, is our pearl of great price. Um, the one, the only one worthy of all our attention and worship. All right. And next, thirdly, um, how? Praise him with everything, okay? Praise him with your life.

Back then, they had all these instruments to praise with, right? And it's not to say that we aren't to do that, right? We have worship and we have music and, um, it's amazing. But, um, Romans 1.25 says this, um, because of Jesus' death and resurrection, he has made the way open to pour out our praise, the one it should go to. He calls us to turn away, repent from praising tiny things and praising Jesus instead. Later on, it says, Paul urges us, I urge you brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.

This is your true and proper worship, okay? So, I think a lot of times we have turned away, we have praised created things rather than praised, um, the creator.

[ 25 : 51 ] This tells us to do something a little bit different, right? Not just praise, not just the things that we sing or dance or play as instruments, right? But to offer our lives as a living sacrifice.

So, this is the true and proper worship. Jesus wants everything. He demands everything, right? Not just skill and not just a little bit of practice and, you know, he wants our lives, everything, every part of that. That is true and that is proper worship, okay? It's not just an action, it's not just half an hour on a Sunday, it's something that we live out for years and years and years and years. So, how does our life reflect our call to praise him with everything, right? Just something to reflect on. And lastly, who? This is the only thing that hasn't changed from back then till now. The only thing that hasn't changed is who will be praising the Lord and that's everyone. It says everyone, um, everything that has breath is to praise the Lord. Uh, but I think it's, it's bigger than that. I don't think the Psalm was only looking at things that breathe. Um, Psalm 19 tells us, the heavens declare the glory of God. The skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day, they pour forth speech. Night after night, they reveal knowledge. They have no speech. They use no words. No sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into the, all the earth. Their words to the ends of the world, right? I mean, we live in a beautiful place.

We live in a beautiful country. You just have to go outside. You look at the sea. You look at the sky. You look at the mountains. And they just worship God just by being, right? They have no breath. And yet the whole world can see, the whole world can hear, um, them lifting the praise to the creator. Big things matter, but if, I don't know if you looked at science, if you've ever paid attention to biology, even cells, as small and as intricate, they all work in perfect tandem with each other, I think for me, that points to a creative, almighty creator, um, that's worthy of our praise, right? Even the heavens and the sky paint this picture of worship. Even the cells and tiny little biomes paint this picture of worship. John says in Revelation 5.13 as well, then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in them saying to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb be praise and honor and glory and power forever and ever, right? So that's a little bit reassuring as well. You know, we're not the only ones here praising God on a Sunday afternoon, right? All throughout time, all throughout history, 24-7, 365, right? The heavenly beings in the, in heaven and earth and everywhere are crying out and praised our God. We're only joining in on this tiny little bit of praise, right? It doesn't mean that it's no less important, right? But also reminds us that God is worthy of this praise by everyone.

Okay? So as we get to the end of our series of the Psalms and we move into Ephesians next, I wonder which of the Psalms have been stuck in your head the most, right? Like a melody you can't really get out of your head. Did you laugh along with the happy song in Psalm 1? Did you feel like your tears were like the ocean as you cried along to Psalm 42? I don't know if you remember these things. Or did you find rest and relaxation in the Sabbath song? Did you count the blessings of the Lord and reminisce in 103, the remembering song? Or did you need to be reminded that this place is not a home, our home, as you meditated on Psalm 137, the exile song, right? And whichever Psalm we have playing in the background of the radio, it's a road trip, right? And we have to remember that life takes us through picturesque landscapes as well. But they also take us through bleak and dreary cities sometimes.

I think the important thing to remember and why Psalm 150 was placed at the end is all these things direct us to praise. The final destination is always praise, right? Whether we are happy, whether we're sad, whether we're enjoying where we are, whether we're not. It all ends in praise. And at the end of creation, right? And the day that our Lord Jesus returns and this earth is done, I think it's really reassuring that we will be praising. The final destination is always praise. And by the grace of our Lord Jesus, I hope that we can all meet here one day. Cool. Shall we pray?

[ 30 : 57 ] Heavenly Father, Lord, yeah, we just thank you for this time. Lord, we thank you for showing us that we're not alone in this journey of praise, Lord. Remind us, Lord, as we just kind of discovered this and learned this for ourselves, what it means to praise you, right? Who is to praise you?

Where we can praise you? How can we praise you? And we thank you for Jesus, the perfect sacrifice. He has changed the way and invited us into this place of praise that the Israelites could only have dreamed of. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you have reconciled us with our Father. And we can enjoy, enjoy and join in to praise as it's meant to be. And Lord, as we just continue to praise and as we continue to worship, may you speak to us and shine a light on the areas of our life that is lacking, Lord, when we can't praise you in these times or where we are right now. Lord, thank you for accepting all our methods of worship, whether it's loud or quiet, whether it's with tears or with smiles.

Lord, may you just continue to accept this worship and continue to teach and guide us. We thank you, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.