**The WHAT of praise**. In Hebrew, the word “praise,” means “to acknowledge...God’s character and works.” In Greek, to praise means to “profess or confess.” Both words convey the impulse to declare God’s greatness and glory to others. Praise, whether it be in prayer, reading scripture, speaking, or singing, is our witness to God’s character and works before the world. That is WHAT praise is.

**The WHERE of praise.** “Praise God in his sanctuary,” says the Psalmist (v. 1).Typically, we think of the sanctuary as the room at church where we gather for worship. But the apostle Paul asks, “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s sanctuary and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?” (1 Cor. 3:16). If *you* are God’s sanctuary, that means wherever you are, in whatever you are doing, you can offer God praise. Each one of us is the WHERE of praise.

**The WHY of praise.** We are to praise God becauseof what God has done for us. The Psalms remind us of God great deeds. God formed us in the womb and ordained all the days of our life (Ps. 139). God sent Jesus to die for our sins (Ps. 22). God provides for our every need as our good Shepherd (Ps. 23). God forgives the repentant sinner (Ps. 32). God’s power is sufficient in times of trouble (Ps. 57). God offers grace for our old age (Ps. 71). God gives us God’s Word to teach and guide us (Ps. 119).

But God is also worthy of praise simply for who God is. God is perfect, lacking in nothing. God is “the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God” (1 Tim. 1:17); “the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light” (1 Tim. 6:16). “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created” (Rev. 4:11). God’s mighty acts of power and God’s surpassing greatness are the WHY of praise.

**The HOW of praise.** We get the sense from these verses that we are to pull out the stops and give God praise with everything we’ve got! We use our breath to blow the trumpet; use our fingers to play the harp and lyre; use our whole hand to hit the tambourine (timbrel); move our whole body in the dance (150:3-5). The HOW of praise means giving God our whole being: heart, and mind, and soul, and strength (Deut. 6:5).

**The WHO of praise.** When we begin to appreciate the *what, where*, *why*, and *how* of praise, we can more fully comprehend theWHO of praise. Who should offer praise to God? “Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!” (v. 6). Since God gives the breath of life, it is fitting that breath is the only qualification for praising God. Without breath there is no life. To live means to praise the One who gives us life. The WHO of praise is you, and me, and all of creation, giving thanks and praise to God our Creator.

The message of Psalm 150 is that praise must be a priority for God’s people. If we aspire to be people of praise, we must understand the *What, Where, Why, How,* and *Who* of praise:

* *What*: God is praised as our witness to the world
* *Where*: God is praised everywhere, at anytime
* *Why*: God is praised for God’s mighty acts and surpassing greatness
* *How*: Gods is praised with our whole being
* *Who*: God is praised by all creation

2020 has been a challenging year in so many ways. But Psalm 150 reminds us that God is faithful toward us, and God deserves our praise. Which is why today we are lifting our voices in praise to God whose mighty acts of power sustain us and who is known to us by God’s surpassing greatness. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Amen.

Sources:

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**The 411 on Praise**

Sunday, August 23, 2020 Psalm 150

Lake Alice Hymn Sing, Fergus Falls, MN

**Psalm 150**

Praise the Lord.Praise God in his 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 timbrel and dancing,

Praise him with the strings and pipe,

Praise him with the clash of cymbals,

Praise him with resounding cymbals.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord.

The word “praise” appears over 200 times in the Bible; 100 times in the Psalms alone. Here, in Psalm 150, the importance of praise is emphasized by the fact that in the six short verses we are directed to praise God 13 times! Every sixth word is a command to praise God! Psalm 150 gives us the *What, Where, Why, How,* and *Who* of praise.