

# Ascribe to the Lord Our Worship

*Psalm 29*

***Why am I here?      Why am I doing what I'm doing?      What does our kind of worship say about God?***

We are here to worship our Lord. Worship is so much more than prayer for the things we desire, and it is so much more than just singing.

The Apostle Paul declared, "I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also" 1 Corinthians 14: 15.

Paul is declaring that we need a healthy balance between feeling and intellect in our worship through prayers and praises. We are experiencing living history as we witness the devastating fires, this is a time where more than ever we need to be focussed on our worship of God.

Let's be honest. When tragic times hit, there doesn't seem to be much to worship God for. How are we to worship God in these times? First, let's be real with our feelings. It's o.k. to confess our pain, loss and even our anger. God is not asking us to pretend in these times.

Worship of God, especially in the midst of devastating times, is where we need to be thinking and knowing who God is as well as feeling and understanding what is going on in our heart. We usually don't see anything God could possibly be doing in circumstances like this.

Today I want to reassure you that God is with us and worthy of our prayer, praise and worship.

let's unpack Psalm 29

1. The Lord's Sovereignty over Heavenly Beings (29:1-2);
2. The Lord's Sovereignty over the "forces of Nature" (29:3-9);
3. The Lord's Sovereignty over Humanity (29:10-11).

## **1. The Lord's Sovereignty over Heavenly Beings (29:1-2)**

*Ascribe to the LORD, O mighty ones [heavenly beings],  
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.*

*Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;  
worship the LORD in the splendour of his holiness. (Psalm 29:1-2)*

Ascribe means to say that it belongs to the Lord, it is his character, to credit him with this (thing). The psalmist is saying realize this is who our God is.

This Psalm begins by urging the angels, addressed as "heavenly beings," to ascribe to the LORD this (thing) which is His "glory and strength," "the glory due His Name" and to "worship the LORD in the splendour of holiness." Its interesting how these characteristics of the LORD are revealed through His holiness.

Holiness? Before we rush on, take a moment to reflect on the meaning of holiness. What is the holiness of God? What is it to be holy? The term speaks of being separate, especially being separate from sin, separate from anything that defiles. God, therefore, is pure, undefiled, full of goodness and righteousness and because of this, the angels worship Him.

So, to say that it belongs to the Lord, it is his character, we have a wonderful God in our midst who is worthy to be worshiped and the angels testify by their actions to this.

2/ The Lord's Sovereignty over the "forces of Nature" (29:3-9);

The Psalmist provides multiples reason through nature to praise the LORD—His power and majesty; His rule over all nature; His intimate oversight of even the most minute detail of life. Therefore, all creation cries, "Glory!" As I think of waking up yesterday morning I heard the morning song of the bird down our gully. Now consider the words of Paul and his emphasis on creation praising the Living God, "The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation **has been groaning** together in the pains of childbirth until now" Romans 8: 19 – 22. And then at home, by afternoon the smoke had rolled in reminding me of creation groaning.

This passage from Paul's Letter to Romans Christians was drafted to compel readers to gain a true perspective of all that is going on in life. At any given moment, it may appear that life is unfair, that wickedness is winning, and many may have questioned 'what on earth is going on?'; however, the **Apostle encourages believers to look to the creation**, especially taking note that the creation is only barely restrained as it waits for "the revealing of the sons of God." Doesn't that make you think of John's encouragement? "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is" 1 John 3: 2. We can only imagine! Let us praise God, even in the midst of all we are going through.

Let's reflect quickly on **Natural LAW?** We think that in our modern world that we have escaped superstition, but we haven't. Be careful with what you listen to in the media and what is forecast. John Calvin once said, "Philosophers think not that they have reasoned skilfully enough about inferior causes, unless they separate God very far from his works. It is a diabolical science, however, which fixes our contemplations on the works of nature, and turns them away from God." My greatest encouragement to help you with your worship in these times is, 'don't fixate on the media', yes be informed so that you know how to prepare and act BUT do not take your eyes off the Lord.

Natural law is nothing more than a shorthand way of describing "what God usually does." A miracle is what He sometimes does (and there have been many miracles and answers to prayer over the past week as we have lived through these devastating fires). Remember, 'in Christ, all things hold together' (Colossians. 1:17), **and this is always, constantly true**. God reveals Himself in the stars, in the oceans, and in the blackness of the thunderhead. Moses approached the thick darkness *where God was* (Exodus. 20:21). The Ten Commandments

were spoken from the thick darkness (Deuteronomy. 5:22). "Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne" (Psalm 97:2).

Our Lord is sovereign over nature, one of the phrases I was challenging people with over the past two weeks as they have heard the news and pending disaster was, 'What are you asking for?' 'In what way are you engaging with God in these times?'

On Saturday as I was preparing my own place, I was deeply moved to leave it and let it go. I was moved to go to the Bega Showground and call the leaders to pray. Our prayer was, 'Lord, we ask that you calm this impending storm, You are able.' And I was also moved to organise a public prayer meeting at the Showground at 5pm. It was announced over the PA and all were invited. Even though it was dark and smoky we worshipped, Douglas and Lorna led the worship and we prayed, and prayed with sincerity. It was deeply moving, and God was with us and our prayers were answered.

Start praying, and believing in what God is able to do, this is our opportunity and calling. Let's ASCRIBE to God what is due to His name. Let's focus on our Lord first and foremost, He is Lord over creation.

### 3/ The Lord's Sovereignty over Humanity (29:10-11).

It is a wonderful thing to praise God because He is worthy of praise. Surely, we saw that as the angels praise Him. However, there will always be those moments when we struggle to praise God because we hurt, because we are oppressed, because we are frightened by the threats of this dying world. At such times, it is a good thing to remember God and what He has done on our behalf. As we recall Him and all that He has done for us, we will soon come back to praise Him. God is in control!

I love the tale of the old saint, a beautiful old lady, who, when she was asked what her favourite verse of the Bible was, responded, "My favourite verse is that one that says, 'It came to pass.'" Her discussor was surprised and asked for clarification. "What do you mean when you say your favourite verse is the one that says, 'It came to pass?'" The old saint replied, "Life can be hard sometimes and if I let it worry me, things could be unbearable. When life gets like that, I remind myself that 'It came to pass.' Nothing comes to stay; trouble always 'came to pass.'"

Few of us see things in that way, but what a great way to see what is taking place in our lives, especially in these devastating times. Surely, we can praise God for such mercies!

By the way, "And it came to pass" occurs **396 times** in the King James Bible! (Or 453 time if you drop the "And.")

As the preacher stood to offer the prayer, he lifted his face to Heaven and said, "Father, I praise you that every day is not like this day!" That's the way to honour God.

Surely, there are other Christians who have encouraged you, perhaps even in this past week? Does their faithfulness cause you to worship God for enabling their faithful service, for preparing them to encourage you and others, for preparing them to provide needed

comfort? When I was talking to Mrs C at Bemboka, [fire came right up to their home] she said, “Some people ask ‘where is God?’ but you know I have been up to the Bemboka Hall and I can see God’s hand at work everywhere; in words of comfort, in kindness, in generosity, in people coming and serving, in the cooking, in people helping others.”

Paul praised God for the Thessalonian saints, writing, <sup>2</sup>We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. <sup>3</sup>We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our LORD Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, <sup>5</sup>because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. <sup>6</sup>You became imitators of us and of the LORD, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. <sup>7</sup>And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. <sup>8</sup>The LORD's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore, we do not need to say anything about it, <sup>9</sup>for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup>and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath’. 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10.

**Worship is declaring the greatness of our Lord. How might we be a model to others up and down the coast and around Australia?**

The act of worship can be just about anything that honours God. As the apostle Paul says in Romans 12:1, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.” Again in 1 Corinthians 10:31 he says, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” I like the fact that eating can be worship, who can you invite over for a meal?

As we put this in perspective, we know that mere man cannot really give God anything except our prayers and praises. God really does not need us, we need Him. He loves us and wants us, but it is not necessary for His existence. On the other hand, our entire existence depends upon God.

So, with all you do: *Ascribe to the LORD, all that live here in the Bega Valley, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendour of his holiness. AMEN*