

From creating order out of chaos, calling and caring for God's people in the wilderness, and directing the prophets, to calling disciples, sending the Holy Spirit upon the early church, healing, and equipping the church to tell of God's glory, God has been throughout history abundantly alive and active. Guess what? God is still abundantly alive and active. "God is not dead (*Newsboys*)." God is still doing wondrous things. God is still creating, calling, caring, directing, sending, healing, and equipping. God is still making possible what many through the ages have thought to be impossible. God is still making able what many have thought to be unable. God is still saying can when so many want to settle for can't.

This past week of Vacation Bible School was a good example. It was an AWESOME week. The theme of "God's Wonder Lab" exposed all of us to scriptures and stories and revelations of God's wondrous deeds. Over the last couple of years, it hasn't been a very good idea to host VBS, but this year God said yes and helped empower a great team of leaders and volunteers and participants and families to make it happen. You can talk with Kathleen sometime about the nature of programming, especially with children and youth. One minute you have the very real thought that there is no way all this can happen. You look at the long list and know that you are unable to do it on your own and wonder whether there will be enough others to rally around. You even dare to think, "this is impossible." You put one foot in front of the other and begin to move. The Holy Spirit serves as your power to go on one more step. Soon the momentum is rolling and running and.... You know the rest. God helps make the impossible possible, the unable able, and the can't can. God's wondrous deeds are around us all the time unfolding miracles both large and small.

Last Sunday we began this series of Impossible Possibilities with the power of Pentecost and the breath and fire of God reigning down, melting, molding, filling, and using us as the Church to glorify God. Perhaps we can think of Pentecost and allow its message to inspire us to know and declare that God is on the loose.

This Sunday, liturgically, we celebrate the Holy Trinity, recognizing and giving praise to God, three in one, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in which the Father is the Son and the Son is the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is the Father, and yet, the Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is not the Father. Sound impossible? Sure, it does, but it is possible with God. The Holy Trinity indeed is a mystery requiring faith, not logic, to connect the dots. It is through the relationship and power of the Holy Trinity that God's wondrous deeds are embodied and fulfilled.

I would like to offer that we turn now to Psalm 98, an enthronement psalm rich and powerful in praise and honor to God, who alone is worthy to be praised and worshipped for all God is and all God does. This psalm gives insight to us for why God is the one we are to praise and how indeed the psalmist suggests we ought to praise.

### **Read Psalm 98**

Why is God the one we are to praise? Victory! With God, in God, through God, by God, we have victory. And because we have victory with God, the psalmist says, "Sing to the Lord!"

Verses 1-3 and verse 9 frame the psalm and provide the rationale for such an extravagant declaration and display of praise. The word "victory" is repeated three times in verses 1-3, and it means to "deliver" or "free." The "right hand" and the "holy arm" of God are able to deliver humanity, and, indeed, all of creation from the many oppressions with which we and it are faced. Verse 9 states that God not only delivers but comes to judge the earth and the world. This verse is rich in imagery and promise. "The earth" and "the world" are used together to describe what God is coming to judge. The word "earth" here identifies with the whole of the earthly realm referencing back to Genesis 1 and the creation of all things.

With God we are victors. Victors over what? The psalmist says over anything and everything that causes oppression or is an oppression. With God, we experience victory over darkness, sin, and even death. With God, we experience victory over worry, fear, anxiety, and our insatiable need to control. With God, we experience victory over things we come to believe are impossible or unthinkable.

But wait! What? How? Sure, I believe God is king and I believe God is sovereign, but after all, we are here, in the habitable world, and God is there, in the heavenly realm. How does/can the judgment and righteous and equity of God play itself out here? Good question. Maybe we should ask the paralytic and blindman and herniating woman and child knocking on death's door that now are healed; or the single mom who couldn't find work and now keeps 2 jobs and has just moved into a new house; or the veteran who felt cast aside and left behind and now stands tall with purpose and belonging at a new post helping teenagers make better decisions; or the student who barely made it through middle school and now prepares to attend college this Fall; or the child who lost their parents too early in life and wonder who will love them and now has arms wrapped tight around them with kisses goodnight before bed.

I don't know the exact answer for how God does it, but I do have faith God has, does, and will. With God, who cares deeply for all God has created, there has been, is, and will be victory. Ultimately, faith in God leads us to the assurance that at the end of all things, whenever and wherever that might be, God WILL set all things right. And it is in this faith and hope that we are catapulted into action with

the belief that because can and will in the end, God can and will now. So, we join God in fighting the good fight and do our best to be beacons of God's love and light throughout the world so as many people as possible can know of God's victory.

And because God brings victory, both in the here and now and in eternity, what is it we are to do? All humanity and all creation are to join in celebratory song of God's reign.

Psalm 98 invites all of creation to celebrate God's sovereignty not only with song but with the loud clamoring of "musical instruments". This is why we sing as a part of worship. This is the purpose behind the offering of the choir or soloists or instrumentalists. This is the motive behind each artist who sings and performs the good news to the masses on stage or on the radio or YouTube. Singing is both a response done in gratitude for what has happened in being delivered and a strength to carry one through the struggle toward freedom.

Listen to what Lincoln Brewster sings in his song, "The God of the Impossible":

*Lord, I come with newfound faith... I will trust every word you say... all my fears I am laying down at your feet...*

*I will trust in your grace that cannot be earned... walk through the fire and not be burned... all my doubts have lost their sound to your voice...*

*Lord, I come with willing hands... use my life to fulfill your plan... all I have I give to you an offering...*

How could he sing these things and believe these things? How is it that he can declare "even in the valley still my heart will sing"? Because God can do the impossible...

*Nothing is impossible with God... God is who God is- the God of the impossible!!!*

And *I Am They* are singing praise to God for victory in their song, "No Impossible with You":

*Are you staring down any giants? Do you feel like you can't see past your pain? Have your songs turned to silence? Does God seem a thousand miles away?*

*Do you still believe?*

*Because there's no heart God can't rescue... No war God can't win...*

*No story so over, it can't start again... No pain God won't use...*

*No wall God won't break through... It might be too much for you...*

*But there is no impossible with God*

*God is alongside you in fighting all your battles  
God is breathing life again  
God is mighty in your weakness  
God's name is greater  
God's love is stronger  
God's ways are higher*

Whether you feel like you can sing or not, make a joyful noise to the Lord, for God is worth singing for. God is worth playing for. God is worth living for. God is worth our everything, for with God, we have victory.

As we prepare to turn to God in prayer now, I would like to share a few pastoral notes asking you to keep the following in your prayers:

Stannard Preston, Ellie Hubbard, Betty Anne Ebert, Gary Stroud, Mitchell Mays, Rebecca Hensley, the family of Diane Carrington, the family of Charles Leys, the family of David Blue, Dan Messerschmidt, and all others who may remain unmentioned at this time...

Let us pray:

God of great grace and God of great glory, how wonderful you are and how marvelous are your deeds. We thank you for your presence with us. We give praise to you for your splendor displayed in your creation. We honor your sacrifice and gift of love poured out to all humankind through the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. Your abundant gifts of grace and mercy and forgiveness help us to be enough for you. We glorify the power and presence of the Holy Spirit who guides and counsels and comforts and empowers us to be your faithful disciples in this time and place. Without the Holy Spirit poking and provoking us in love, who knows what paths we might follow?

Today, we are particularly grateful for the good news of your sovereignty and victory over all the earth. It can be so easy to get caught up in all the news and horror and struggle all over the world, but to know there is hope in you is reassuring. We pray we can focus on you in these times of uncertainty. We pray we can lean into and on you for strength and courage in the face of surgery or treatment or maybe even death. We pray we can trust in your great power to deliver and free us from all oppression and help us experience victory with you.

May we sing of your glory God. May we dance and play and sing of your wondrous deeds. You are God and holy is your name. We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who taught his disciples of every time and place to pray together... **Our Father...**