

Wednesday Prayer Recording
May 13, 2020
Psalm 29

Good evening and thank you for joining me. Our Wednesday evening devotionals and time of prayer is meant to help you through our time apart and remind each of us that while separated and kept from many of our normal activities, we can continue to find our connection through prayer. So, this evening, remember, you are not alone. Others are praying with you tonight. We may miss our programs, but it isn't our programs that unite us. What unites us is our faith and trust and hope in Christ.

This evening I'd like us to look at Psalm 29.

Psalm 29 is a poem about the staggering majesty of God's power over *everything*. It's a poem that tells us all things are under God's control. Things in nature may appear chaotic, unchecked, and overwhelming. But what the Psalm teaches us is that God's people can look at the same natural events as everyone else and not see chaos but purpose. So, let's see how that is the case.

Notice where the Psalm begins. It is a scene of heavenly worship. And at the end of verse 2, the text is literally saying, "Worship the LORD for the splendour of (his) holiness." And so, before the Psalm deals with what's happening on earth, the focus is on what's happening in heaven. And what's happening is that God is being adored and praised and worshiped for his holiness.

Why is that important? I think what the Psalm is teaching us here is that before we can understand what's happening around us, we need to know what's happening beyond us. And what's happening beyond us is that in heaven God is being seen and worshiped because he is perfectly holy. In other words, God is being worshiped, not because he's a tyrant who forces the angels to worship him, but because the angels are able to see that he is truly worthy of worship because of his perfect character.

And here's why that is comforting: We don't always perceive God's perfect goodness in the things around us. There's suffering and pain and loss in our lives. And sometimes those trials and hardships are like dark clouds that obstruct our vision. But these opening verses are like corrective lenses. They help us see that God is receiving unending worship because he is unceasingly good and glorious and strong. And so, whatever we experience in this life isn't a result of God ceasing to be good. The things around us, no matter how hard or bitter, are not the result of some deficiency or corruption in God.

And then, in verses 3-9, the scene shifts to what's taking place on earth. And notice what's happening. The voice of the LORD is showing its power over the most impressive things in nature. *The voice of the LORD is over the waters. The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars. The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness. And, the voice of the LORD causes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forests bare.*

All of that could be interpreted as a scene of utter chaos. It could look as if no one had control of anything. But look at how verse 9 ends, "And in his temple all say, 'Glory!'" In his commentary, Derek Kidner says that this is "a response of humility, joy and understanding which reveals that, to some, the storm is not an outbreak of meaningless or hostile forces, but the voice of the Lord, heard in all his works."¹

¹ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, Kinder Classic Commentaries, (Downers Grove: IVP Academic), 144.

And then, in verse 10, we're told, "The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever." This is a reference to the flood during Noah's life. Think about what the flood displayed. There was no natural event of greater force. Nothing that seemed to more persuasively suggest that the things in this world totally are unpredictable and out-of-control. But that isn't true, is it? The flood was a display of God's power. It was God's instrument for judgment. It was to fulfill his purpose. All the while it was within his control and under his command.

And in view of the flood, notice the hope in verse 11. The Psalm ends with a humble, confident trust that the LORD, will give strength and bless his people with peace. God's people have a unique comfort amid trials and storms that God is the one enthroned over those things and will not allow those things to ultimately destroy us. What they know as God's people is that they have not control over God. But they know God isn't out-of-control. They know that behind all things, all events is the all-powerful, holy God.

And the reason we have that humble, confident trust is that we are safe *in* Christ. When we look at Christ and what he's done for our ultimate good, we're able to see that God's infinite power has been put to work to rescue us, not destroy us. And so, this evening, I want to remind that if we're going to understand what is going around us, we have to look beyond ourselves. We have to see the one who sits on the throne is the same one who was nailed to the cross for us. So, remember, the things going on around us are under the sovereign hand of God. And that hand is working all things for his glory and our good.

And so, amid the troubles and trials around us, may God give us strength and bless us with his peace. May he grant us the eyes of faith to see all that is transpiring around us and join our voices with the heavenly host and proclaim the glory and strength and holiness of our Lord. Amen.