

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
Transfiguration (series A.)
March 2, 2014 Psalm 148 NASB.**



Praise the Lord

The Whole Creation Invoked to Praise the Lord.

148.1 Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights! ² Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! ³ Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all stars of light! ⁴ Praise Him, highest heavens, And the waters that are above the heavens! ⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He commanded and they were created. ⁶ He has also established them forever and ever; He has made a decree which will not pass away. ⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth, Sea monsters and all deeps; ⁸ Fire and hail, snow and clouds; Stormy wind, fulfilling His word; ⁹ Mountains and all hills; Fruit trees and all cedars; ¹⁰ Beasts and all cattle; Creeping things and winged fowl; ¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples; Princes and all judges of the earth; ¹² Both young men and virgins; Old men and children. ¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above earth and heaven. ¹⁴ And He has lifted up a horn for His people, Praise for all His godly ones; *Even* for the sons of Israel, a people near to Him. Praise the LORD!

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Bob worked at a warehouse in Milford, Iowa. Bob was on a break – heading for the washroom when he went by a candy machine – set a little bit in from the wall. Bob thought he could really go for a Twix candy bar. I like Twix – the crispy cookie – with a little bead of caramel on it – then chocolate over it. Kind of long – not to be mistaken for that other candy-bar – a Kit Kat! Bob put in a nice flat \$1 – and the little wire corkscrew started to turn – a little bit. It stopped! Don't you hate when that happens? Push the machine – nothing! Bob put in another nice flat clean \$1 and it wire turned just a little more – still the candy bar didn't fall. Now Bob was really frustrated! He had spent \$2 on a stupid 90¢ candy-bar and had nothing to show for it. Wait a minute. Bob walked back into the warehouse – got his fork-lift – and confronted the frustrating candy

machine. To hear him tell it – Bob was just being careful – not to shake the candy machine and have it fall on you. There’s a sticker warning against that! So he just picked up the candy machine with the fork-lift and put it back down again – like 5 or 6 times – pretty fast – so that now there were 3 Twix Bars on the bottom. Truth be told – don’t you kind of think – *way to go Bob* – I wish I could do that!? Don’t you? It looked to the boss like Bob was stealing candy bars. Bob lost his job! Because he lost his job – Bob lost his house. Bob lost his girlfriend and she took with her Bob’s new baby daughter! What a mess! But that’s how it often is in this world messed up and spoiled by sin. Today again – we hear God’s Word filled with Law and Gospel. Today we find forgiveness by grace through faith. And when we have that forgiveness in our heart and life we are enabled to give thanks to the LORD. Today God’s Word – the Psalm assigned to be read or chanted today – Transfiguration Day says:

I. All Creation Praise the LORD!

II. Everyone will praise Him.

For 8 Sundays now we have been celebrating Epiphany. Since January 6th – for 8 weeks we have been thinking about how Jesus would shine or show forth his power and glory as the very Son of God – made flesh to redeem us! ... Today we are looking at Psalm 148 – the Psalm we sang – that gives praise to the LORD. There are of course – 150 Psalms. The last 5 Psalms are Hallelujah – literally **Praise the LORD** Psalms – the final Hallel! Psalm 148 – some suggest – was written around the time of the *after the Babylonian exile* prophets Haggai and Zechariah. If you go home to Heaven sometime soon – and the first person you bumped into was Haggai – what would you say? If he asked you – what you thought about his part of God’s Word what would you say? Again – to say – it is most certainly inspired and inerrant – breathed by the Holy Spirit and without mistake or contradiction – powerful, sufficient and effective – Haggai might say – that’s a good WELS answer – but it sounds like you never read it?! So – before you to go sleep tonight – having read Obadiah last time – this time read Haggai. It’s only 2 chapters long. It’s 15 verses plus 23 – that’s just 38 verses. The LORD urges His people to rebuild the Temple. If the people live in nice paneled homes – it was past time to rebuild the Temple – where God’s people came to worship. The people obeyed their Heavenly Father. The glory of the LORD came near them. The LORD promised blessings for a people once defiled – made impure by sin! Here

again is comfort in the grace and goodness of God! Haggai and Zechariah. Zechariah is a little bit longer – some 14 chapters. Once you read it – you will never forget Zechariah. Zechariah is apocalyptic in style – a revelation! Apocalyptic – like *Apocalypse Now* – and so. Zechariah is like Ezekiel and Daniel and in the New Testament The Revelation to St. John! Zechariah saw visions – like the vision of a horsemen! Again – like the horses of the apocalypse – in Revelation! Zechariah writes about a vision of horns and craftsmen – a vision of a man with a measuring line – a vision of Joshua and the High Priest – a vision of a golden lampstand – like The Revelation to St. John – a vision of a flying scroll – a vision of a woman who is wickedness personified – in a woven basket – with a lead lid – the basket carried off by women with wings like storks...and much *much* more! There is a word picture of Palm Sunday – Hebrew poetry in Zechariah. More than 400 years before the fact – the Gospel promises of God – recorded – then fulfilled in the life of Christ!

So – it was in the days of Haggai and Zechariah – that the 3rd of the 5 Hallel Psalms was written – Psalm 148. It is a song of praise. Praise from angels – praise from created things – praise from God’s people! **Praise the LORD!** Praise is worship – to pray, praise and give thanks! We come to Church---to St. Luke’s to **praise the LORD!** We come with a plan. We come to Church prepared. We have a different path of worship on Thursday/Sunday morning – week to week. We confess our sins and hear absolution as from Jesus himself. We hear God’s Word – from the scroll of the prophet of the LORD. We sing a Psalm. We read an Epistle lesson – often from the same letter – for 4 or 5 or 6 weeks in a row. We read a Gospel lesson – again maybe as many as 10 or 15 weeks in a row – working through one of the 4 Gospels. We sing hymns and we hear sermons. Sometimes – people go to churches of all kinds of denominations and come back to say – well – it was all pretty much the same. But you have to stop and ask yourself – if it’s all the same – then why so many denominations? You need to think it through. There are lots of different kinds of churches because if you stop and think – they are in many respects very different in what they believe and teach and confess! Different denominations – for example – teach that the Bible contains God’s Word. By that they mean it’s true in what it says about God and God-stuff – but could very easily contain copying mistakes and errors – errors concerning geography and history and miracles and biology and botany and medicine. We believe that

the Bible is God's Word – inspired and inerrant – Holy Spirit breathed and without mistake or contradiction in theology and geography – if the Bible says there was a city in a certain place that's where it was – whether we can dig it up today or can't find a trace today. Creation – 6 days 24 hours each – about 6,000 years ago. That's what the Bible teaches. There are essential differences in what different denominations teach – concerning creation, predestination, heaven and hell, conversion, original sin. Some denominations teach the bread and wine in communion remind you of Jesus' body and blood. Some teach the bread and wine are transubstantiated that is – turned into body and blood – no longer bread and wine. Some teach wine is wrong – it should be grape juice because all alcohol – is always sinful. Some denominations teach baptism is a dedication and some teach it's not right to baptize infants. Some teach you must immerse or it isn't baptism. These are not little fine details. These are about the essence of our faith. This is not to say that people from different denominations don't go to heaven. No one ever says you must be Lutheran or Wisconsin Synod to go to heaven – although there are other denominations that say you must believe as they do – or you are forever lost! **Praise the LORD** – worship him **in spirit and in truth**. We need to read and study and discuss God's Word in Church and Bible class and at home – to be sure that what we hear on Sunday morning is faithful to God's Word!

Praise the LORD from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights!
² Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! ³ Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all stars of light! Praise the LORD – sun and moon and stars and planets! Do you know much about astronomy? Do you know much about our place in space – in our solar system? They had one of those reporters that go on the sidewalk and ask people what ought to be pretty simple questions – only to find out again and again how many people don't know some pretty fundamental truths. For instance – we live on – planet earth is part of what's called a what? A *solar* system. And why – you ask is it called a *solar* system – because the solar – the sun – is at the center of this system. We on earth are spinning once around every 24 hours – orbiting the sun – all the way around every 365 days – give or take every 4 years – with that leap-year thing! One of those sidewalk reporters the other day in his sampling found 1 out of every 4 people didn't know about this going around the sun thing! That's 25%. Yikes! Have you seen the sun

lately? You learn pretty early on – do not look at the sun! But there are all kinds of telescopes and stuff that with the right filters can look at the sun. And they showed on the news just the other day – these solar storms – solar flares – huge flames – leaping and lashing out from the surface of the sun. How does the sun praise the LORD? By doing what the sun does – which is make sunshine and by warming the earth like it does! There is this thing called the Kepler Telescope. I think it's actually out there – out in space. It is discovering more and more planets up there – *way out there* – that we didn't even know existed! Does that make you feel small – insignificant? It should! And still the Son of God – was born – lived and died and lives – to save you!

⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth, Sea monsters and all deeps; ⁸ Fire and hail, snow and clouds; Stormy wind, fulfilling His word; ⁹ Mountains and all hills; Fruit trees and all cedars; ¹⁰ Beasts and all cattle; Creeping things and winged fowl... It's cold outside! The polar vortex bringing sub-zero winds. People everywhere are complaining! I will never forget Herb Guenterberg – safe by Jesus in Heaven. When Herb was a young man one winter – it was very very cold. Herb was riding in a wagon in the cold – the really really cold. It was painfully cold. Then Herb started to think – hum... maybe it's not so cold after all. He didn't feel cold – just kind of – I don't know – kind of sleepy. He would just curl up and take a nap! The guy with Herb realized what was happening! Herb was freezing to death! His friend got Herb up and out of the wagon – put his arm around him and walked around and around – faster and faster – all the while saying, "Wake up! Wake up!" Herb said his friend literally saved his life! I don't know that friend's name – but I know Herb did! How could you thank someone who saved your life? How do you thank Jesus for saving your life – saving your soul – saving you for eternity – by dying for you? How do you thank Him? You dedicate your life to thank and praise – to serve and obey him. This is most certainly true!

Praise the LORD... Old men and children. ¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above earth and heaven... We praise the LORD when we come to Church – especially during Ash Wednesday and Lent and Holy Week – Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday – Good Friday and Easter – then Ascension and Pentecost and all the weeks after that – as the Holy Spirit overflows our hearts and colors our life with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. We praise the LORD then – when we do whatever it is we do – with faithfulness – the LORD’s always benchmark! I was visiting at the WRMC the other day – walking through the Harvest House restaurant in the hospital entryway. And there were two chefs by the oven where they slide the home made pizzas in and out on that giant wooden paddle. The chefs were dancing – happy feet – rocking to the beat of the oldies! How cool! Do you have that much fun at your job? Why not! How amazing – to be cheerful – content – joyful ♥-- because you are a redeemed children of God – rescued by the risen Christ! The Easter Gospel is the essential reason for all of us – all the time – to praise the LORD! Praise the LORD! Amen!

To God alone all glory!