

Sexagesima, 2019

The Cry of Victory

Psalm 33

St. Andrew's – Jacksonville, OR

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“Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright. Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise.”

Translations of our scriptures can have a tendency to lead to different conclusions. That is why it is important to look at a variety of interpretations that we may gain a cleaner grasp of what is being passed on. To “play skillfully with a loud noise” sounds like how I would describe much of our modern music today. Very skilled musicians that sound more like someone who just dropped their silverware drawer on the ground. And although I am sure that many would disagree with my interpretation, I leave them entitled to their inaccurate opinions☺

But more than deciding who has better taste in music, understanding the depth and background of Holy Writ is important so that we may all benefit by a most perfect truth. “Loud noise”, “Loud shouts” and “Shouts for joy” are prevalent in the several biblical translation we find for this verse in Psalm 33, yet there is another translation that seems to be more articulate in this particular verse. In the New Jerusalem Bible we read *“Sing to him a new song, make sweet music for your cry of victory.”* Not just a loud noise but a CRY FOR VICTORY!

When I looked into it I found that the original Hebrew word used here indicated a war cry that would precede an attack, a singular focus that would make many individuals into one common cause relationship. There is great power in this kind of unity and we see it used in several places in scripture. For instance, the same word is also used in Joshua 6:5 *“When the ram’s horn sounds (when you hear the sound of the trumpet), the entire people must utter a mighty war cry and the city wall will collapse...”* Here we see everyone on the same page, all in agreement uttering the same cry for victory. Again in Numbers 10:9, *When in your country you go to war against an enemy who is oppressing*

you, you will sound trumpets with a battle cry, and Yahweh your God will remember you, and you will be delivered from your enemies.” In both of these cases we see victory in a united people under the leadership of the one true God. A battle cry has its roots in the one who leads, the one in whom you are fighting for. And in all cases where the battle cry stems from God there is success and there is deliverance.

We too have a Battle Cry? It is the BATTLE CRY of the RIGHTEOUS embodying the power of God Almighty! Ours is the CRY OF VICTORY in CHRIST JESUS who broke through the barriers of sin that once sealed man's fate. Our Christian witness is not just a loud noise...a bunch of clanging silverware but an intelligible cry of victory that draws others to Christ?

We are entering the season of Lent. We come forth in prayer acknowledging our shortcomings, our transgressions, our failures, our disobedience and so much more. Without Christ there is no battle cry...only tears and the gnashing of teeth. Lent keeps us humble, reminds us of our failed human natures and our need for the saving grace of God. In Christ we are counted among the righteous...can we even fathom what that means? But it's true. *“Rejoice in the Lord”* the Psalmist tells us, *“O ye righteous.”* Some how...in Christ...we are made clean. We are made worthy within the fold of the Lamb. We are able to make a joyful noise! Our battle cry stems from the acknowledged truth of our victory found in Christ Jesus. The earth is full of His goodness, we stand in awe of Him, we are under His counsel and He beholds us as we truly are...and he loves us with an unfathomable love. Is he not worthy of a joyful noise, a battle cry equal to the victory?

According to St. Basil the Great, *“The loud noise is a certain inarticulate sound, when those who are fighting side by side in a war shout out in unison with each other. Sing, then, in harmony and in agreement and in union through charity”* (love).

What a beautiful description of the church. Our battle cry...our cry of victory is found in our worship, where we can let go of the worldliness around us and agree that we are one in Christ. The world...out there...makes less sense day by day. The world...out there...is not in unison, or agreement or in harmony. When it comes to truth those

outside of Christ go to great lengths to fool the masses so that their agendas may become truth. We cannot let ourselves be drawn away from the Gospel that we know to be ultimate truth, where our spiritual reality transcends the transient nature of this world. The battle cry of the soul echoes through the ages connecting us to the saints of old and will resonate beyond our days as others answer the call and take up the cry.

“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” In the creation itself we have reason for our belief. In it we can hear the cry of love calling out. If we consider the heavens and the ordering of the stars, and moons and planets; if we look to the earth and all it offers to maintain life; we find evidence for our faith; we find the invisible God in the visible things of this world.

After gathering the Jewish people together, Josiah, in a warrior's cry, bound himself to the covenant of God removing the abominations that had infiltrated Jewish worship and reinstated the celebration of the Passover where faith in Yahweh took away the power of death. And standing in the middle of the Jordan River, John the Baptist, with no concern for his own life, cried out as only a true warrior for Christ could, **“PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD!”**

And Jesus...laying silently in his tomb...in an ultimate warrior's cry...blew open the walls that bind us and now sits at the right hand of the Father! Victory belongs to the Lord, righteousness belongs to the Lord, but both are given to you and to me. We feel the call and we must respond with the warrior's cry in our worship and in our daily edification of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. Take the time during this season of Lent in your praise of God Almighty to acknowledge not that you are righteous but that by the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ you are found righteous.

And so **REJOICE** ye saints of the Lord! May your life be that of a warrior who fights the battle and engages the enemy with the battle cry of love found only in the body of Jesus Christ.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.