

Psalm 29

January 10, 2016

“The King – Enthroned and Eternal”

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday af. Epiphany

Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy and peace be unto you from God our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

Psalm 29 is a hymn of praise to the King of creation.  
It describes the revelation and redemptive actions of God in terms of a storm.

It was most likely used by the ancient Israelites after the autumn rains,  
which made a new planting season the following spring possible.

In attributing the storms to the Lord they were,  
in a sense, confessing their faith in Him  
in the face of the worshipers of Baal,  
who believed that their god was in control of the weather.

That is why, in verses three through nine of this psalm, the thunder associated with these storms is referred to as “the voice of the Lord” no less than seven times.

It is a scary voice. Remember the Israelites at the foot of Mt. Sinai.  
They didn’t want to hear the voice.  
In fact, they told Moses to go speak to God.  
So today we ask ourselves.... What? and Why?

[**WHAT: Peace**] What?

What we seek from the Lord is peace.

David prays in this text: “May the Lord bless His people with peace!”

Everybody claims to seek peace.

It just seems like a good and right and politically correct thing to say.

But the peace that we really need is not simply the absence of hostility  
or the acceptance of one another’s differences  
or being tolerant of people that we really don’t like.

That kind of peace is nothing compared to the real peace with God  
that we need in the face of our sin and rebellion against Him.

This peace comes only through Jesus Christ.

In fact, it has already come in Christ.

He is the One who

- reconciled us to our heavenly Father by living for us the perfect life that God's Law requires of us and by suffering and dying in our place
- offering the one sacrifice of atonement for all human sin.

Every sinner is reconciled to God through the perfect life and innocent death of Christ.

The only sinners who are not reconciled to God are those who refuse to be and choose instead to remain enemies of God by rejecting His peace in Christ.

[*WHAT: Strength*]

So we already have what we seek:

peace with God through the blood of Jesus Christ.

But even after receiving that peace, we still need strength.

Despite what is taught by some well-meaning Protestants, faith, being a living thing, is vulnerable.

It can grow weak and it can die.

The world that we live in is not a healthy environment for a living faith in the Lord Jesus.

Faith is threatened and attacked on every side.

That's because Satan works in and through the world and even through our own sinful nature, trying his best to destroy our faith

- to convince us that believing in God and trusting in Christ are foolish things to do
- to get us to question or doubt what God has revealed to us
- to remind us day in and day out of our sins and shortcomings
- and to make us think that we are so evil as to be beyond redemption.

It is reported that when Martin Luther was assailed by such thoughts he would shout: "I am baptized!"

Our Baptism unites us with Christ and thereby makes us children of God even as He is the Son of God.

God looks at us not as the enemy but as His dear children.  
He may discipline us as any loving father would,  
but He does not punish us because Christ has endured the punishment for all of us.

Paul assures us of this in his letter to the Romans when he writes: ***“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”*** (Romans 8:1).

**[WHY -- Enthroned]**

We turn to the Lord for the things that we seek because ***“the Lord sits enthroned over the flood.”***

No doubt the earliest readers and singers of this psalm thought of “the flood” in terms of the creation, where the Scriptures tell us:

- “The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:2)
- or perhaps of the great flood that destroyed all of life except for the people and animals that were in the ark with Noah
- or maybe of the exodus from Egypt when the Lord parted the waters of the Red Sea for the Israelites to escape and then returned the waters to destroy their pursuers.

For us today we think of Baptism, since it is in and through the flood of baptismal water that God the Father adopts us as His own children.

We turn to the Lord for the things that we seek because ***“the Lord sits enthroned over the flood.”***

**[WHY – Eternal]**

We also turn to the Lord for the things that we seek because ***“the Lord sits enthroned as King forever.”***

He alone is eternal--without beginning and without end.  
He is the One to whom we can always turn because He is the One who ***“is the same yesterday and today and forever”*** (Hebrews 13:8).

Because He has adopted us in Baptism, He is always our loving Father to whom we can turn for help whenever we need it.

We begin the Divine Service with the words and sign with which we were baptized because it is how we identify with our God, and He with us.

When we confess our sin and hear His Word of absolution,  
it is because we are His baptized children that He hears and forgives.

When we are discouraged and need a word of comfort,  
it is because we belong to Him that He strengthens and encourages us.

When we have doubts and need reassurance,  
it is because we are His that He gives us His Holy Spirit,  
mediated through the Gospel of Christ.

In any and every need He is the One to whom we can turn with confidence,  
as the apostle Peter assures us:  
***“[Cast] all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you”*** (1 Pt 5:7).

**[Conclusion]** Our God is enthroned and eternal. And He is ours.

As we observe today the Baptism of our Lord, we also remember our own.

As He was baptized to initiate His mission of redemption,  
we were baptized so that we might be His ambassadors,  
bringing to everyone with whom we interact the Good News  
of forgiveness, life, and salvation in His name.

As at the Baptism of Jesus God the Father acknowledged Him as His own and  
declared Him to be pleasing to Him, so He has done with us in our Baptism.

More than that, in Baptism His Spirit has united us with Christ in His death and  
resurrection, making us dead to sin and alive in Him.

We have this assurance from the Word of God itself, as the apostle Paul reminds  
us: ***“We were buried . . . with Him by Baptism into death, in order that, just as  
Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in  
newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we  
shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His”*** (Romans 6:4, 5).  
Amen.

So Let us make a joyful noise unto the Lord. Amen!