



LENTEN DEVOTIONAL MARCH 12, 2023

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 150

- 1 Praise the Lord!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament!
- 2 Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his surpassing greatness!
- 3 Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
- 4 Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
- 5 Praise him with clanging cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

6 Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Erik Hoeke, PTS Writer

I have a friend and colleague whose presence is always noticed. Her voice, though friendly, is the loudest in any room. Since we are both clergy, we often see each other at meetings in large sanctuaries that amplify her voice, which reverberates in those spaces like **LOUD, CLASHING CYMBALS!**

“Loud” is not often how people describe me. I’m more like the lute and harp you probably didn’t notice in this psalm’s praise band amidst the trumpets and tambourines and clanging cymbals and dancing worshippers. There’s a lot of unrestrained energy in this psalm’s worship.

But in Lent, pastors and church musicians exercise restraint. Worship is contemplative; the organ and praise band are softer and quieter; we even embrace silence as much as we can stand the discomfort. Then on Easter morning, we *pull out all the stops*—a phrase originating in organ-playing, describing the time when all the pipes are used to get the fullest possible sound.

Some of us are Lent people. We are good at quiet contemplation and drawing others into a silence that notices things more deeply. Others of us are loud Easter people—the life of the party!—who pull out all the stops and release unrestrained energy and excitement reminding us of God’s mighty deeds and surpassing greatness.

God’s holy praise band has soft and loud people and soft and loud instruments. Each have their time and purpose. Each reflect the God we worship, who sometimes spoke in thunderclaps and other times as a whispering wind. People who are soft or loud, or somewhere in between, each bear the image of God.

PRAYER

God of the trumpet and tambourine, of the lute and harp and the clashing cymbals: quiet us so we may notice you. Pull out all the stops to remind us of unrestrained joy. Make music in our sanctuaries and our hearts, so we may worship you in every way. Praise the Lord! Amen.

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