

January 10, 2016 “Whatcha Doin' Sunday Morn?” Psalm 29

Not all that long ago, we in the choir sang a Christmas anthem entitled, Whatcha Gonna Call Him? It is a playful anthem that reminds us of the serious question around the name of Jesus, how he came to be named, and what that name means. And obviously I am still thinking about that anthem a couple of weeks after Christmas. But it reminded me of something tangential to the celebration of Christmas. Worship for us as followers of Jesus is serious business. And yet never so serious that we cannot be playful before God and in the midst of the reality of being the church.

Sunday morning is about worship for us. We all know when we come through those doors at the foot of the stairs, when we climb or ride our way to the upper room what we are going to do when we get here. We know that following worship we will have tea or coffee downstairs and enjoy something sweet, or a sandwich or bread and soup...what the Bible tells us the disciples of Jesus did in the early years following the resurrection of Jesus. “They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching, and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” (Acts 2:42. Notice the order. They did something very meaningful, and then they enjoyed the company of the each other, a meal and there was time to pray.

A have a Roman Catholic friend and neighbour who has been to a couple of events here at St. Andrew's and worshipped with us the Sunday we were given breakfast before worship, and coffee and cookies afterward, and she said she had a really good time. That's the fellowship part. And she added, “Golly you guys eat a lot!” Worship food and fellowship really do go together, and without trying to be funny...its a Biblical recipe. It is what the disciples did in the early years of the church. And we enjoy the continuing

experience in our time.

But at the heart of our Sunday morning experience is this thing we do first. We gather and when we are all together at the appointed time, we worship. I say it is the serious business of the church, the thing at the heart of our coming together. And yet even as I say it is serious business I am reminded we laugh a lot here. It is not the comedy hour. It is not entertainment. But in the fullness of the human experience of worshipping our God who redeems, humour enters in. Frankly given where I have been the last 7 months, laughter with you and in your midst, laughter as we have done the business of worshipping together has been good medicine and high on my list of healing influences. There are also times, have been moments when we have wept together. We do not come to worship and leave our woundedness outside. In fact it is in the presence of the living God, our redeeming Saviour, the Holy Spirit, that our broken hearts are mended, our tears wiped away. Here in the upper room, the sanctuary we find healing mercy, and love, and we find it together.

David, the Psalm writer, it seems to me is talking to some of his colleagues, people of influence, in the world of his day, when he says, "Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength." And clearly he is talking about worship. He is not talking to them about the economy, or reform of the legal system, or even how to administer the country better. He is talking about the kind of things we do regularly on Sunday morning. We gather in this place and we, among other things, sing and pray. And in the words and phrases of the songs and the prayers we talk to God, remembering what he has done in the past, what we desire of Him in the present and in the future. The future is always the scary part of life. The present is where we are

busy coping. But the future is a mystery yet to unfold. It is uncertain. And the tempter plays to our fears when we consider tomorrow. What will we do if that happens? It is foolish and I know it, but I lose sleep over “what I will do if that happens!” What I mean is I lose sleep over the possibility that things can go wrong. That what I fear may occur.

In the opening phrases of Psalm 29 David shares the antidote to losing sleep over what might be. “Ascribe to the Lord, glory and strength.” So important he repeats himself for emphasis. One of the things to be remembered when reading the Old Testament. One of the characteristics of the Hebrew Scriptures is the important stuff gets repeated. “Ascribe to the Lord, glory and strength. It's not just a psychological device of taking your mind off your troubles. It is in fact about confessing your weakness, your pain, your trouble whatever it might be in the midst of a conversation in which you remember the God who created you, who redeems you, who is holy even as we are not holy.

What a friend we have in Jesus. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Praise to the Lord the Almighty. Yes those are lines from hymns we have sung. They are based each one of them on Biblical phrases. And each one in its way is an attempt to rise and shine and give God the glory. Worshipping God is about doing just that. All glory, laud and honour to thee Redeemer King. We sing those kinds of phrases, we pray with those kinds of words on our lips and just that fast we are in a different space. The presence of God is real to us, we remember we are a people who believe. O! We do pray, help us to be stronger in our faith! But every time you walk out your door on the way to church service, every time you turn on the ignition of your car to drive to the sanctuary...to sing the songs and

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pray the prayers you have expressed that fundamental reality about yourself and to our Lord and Saviour. You expressed your faith.

Worship is that important to us. It is that meaningful to us. We hunger for the hope that faith in the Lord brings. And we get a brief taste in the midst of our difficulties and facing the challenges that are uniquely before us as individuals as we ascribe glory to the name of God. As we praise Him. As we name Him, as we bow our heads before Him. Karl Barth in his great work, *The Dogmatics* says we come to worship with one question at the edge of our consciousness. "Is it true?" Jesus loves me. Is it true? Jesus crucified is alive. Is it true? God is in heaven. Is it true? He holds the future in His hands. Is it true? He says the responsibility of the preacher, the worship leader is to affirm the realities that bring hope to us all in the midst of real life, in the real world, in the present time.

What do we do on Sunday morning? We worship God without apology. We ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. And in the process we receive blessing. A sliver of confidence. A slice of hope. A dollop of affirmation. We wipe away our tears and we share the laughter that infects our fellowship over coffee. We come out of this upper room different. Maybe only a millimeter different. But nonetheless touched by the experience of being in God's presence in God's sanctuary with God's people. And the love comes a tumbling down,

Don't get me wrong. I am not suggesting our problems melt like butter. I'm not suggesting that your bills have been taken care of. I'm not suggesting the clock has been turned back and you are 25 again, or that your arthritis is gone. I am saying we are

touched in the experience of worshipping God. And I am claiming it somehow becomes easier to take the next step in the journey. Sometimes it becomes clearer what that step should be. And sometimes there is physical healing that simply surprises us and makes us want to shout...Holy. Holy, Holy!

Ascribe to the Lord, glory and strength. What we do here is we remember. We worship God and in the midst of doing so we remember Him, and we remember what he has done. What the Bible tells us His people have experienced in time past. What has been revealed to them. If He could create the universe...by speaking simple powerful words like...Let there be...and there was, imagine what He can do in us and through us and yes...for us. His is the power and the glory.

Whatcha doin' Sunday morn? Every time you set our for service you are remembering the Easter morning. The day of resurrection. Jesus having died for us, being alive and with us. I never grow weary of remembering the worship day for the Jewish community is the Sabbath...Saturday. That what happened on the 3rd day, the Sunday was powerful and so real and so joy filled...so Wow!...that a bunch of Jewish boys and girls found it automatic, natural, God honouring to gather thereafter on Sunday to worship God, to attend to the teaching of the apostles and break bread together and to pray.

This is whatcha do...when Jesus got a hold of your life and he won't let you go. Another song lyric. Praising God and remembering He has constituted us as a circle of His wonderful people. We are the Sunday people who see the world revolving around what happened for us and in us as a result of Jesus

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resurrection on the Sunday morning so long ago. And just like Peter and James and John and Mary and Martha...and we had better not forget David...we ascribe to the Lord on a Sunday morning....glory and strength. We worship the Lord in the splendour of His holiness.

Let us pray;

Heavenly Father we give thanks before you that you have touched the 1st day of this week and are with us in this place as we share the experience. Receive our worship. Our worship is never perfect, but we offer it and ourselves to you. Be with us as we break bread and enjoy food and drink and one another. Go forth with us as we return to the world around us, as we work and as we enjoy recreation. Walk with us that we might walk with you. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen