



Praising the Lord everywhere



A theme reflection for the 2022 Mission Offering

***“Everywhere—from east to west—praise the name of the Lord.”
~Psalm 113:3, NLT***

Such joyful words that flow from the psalmist’s pen! “Everywhere, everyone—praise the name of the Lord!” Psalm 113 begins and ends with “Praise the Lord!”

The Psalms in general run the gamut of human emotion, from the deepest sorrow to the most exuberant praise, with Psalm 113 on the latter end of that spectrum. For me, as one coming from a quiet worship setting in North American Christendom, it has been stretching to experience worship services among our sisters and brothers in Latin America and Africa.

What strikes me most in this passage, aside from the obvious call to joyful (maybe even giddy) praise of the Lord, is the universality of its application. “Everywhere—from east to west,” not unlike the message we find in Romans 1, when Paul reminds us that all of nature cries out for us to recognize and exalt the Creator. No one is excused or exempt from the call to worship.

Likewise, we mustn’t miss the correlation of Psalm 113:3 to Revelation 7:9-10: “After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. And they were shouting with a great roar, ‘Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!’” We prepare for this eschatological praise-fest in our present day worship—our psalms and hymns and spiritual songs—but also by our work of Gospel-sharing, based on Jesus’ command to “Go...and make disciples” (Matthew 28:18).

I have been fascinated by the paradigm shift in missions of recent years. In times past we would send missionaries to faraway lands for them to learn language and culture. They would translate Scripture, present the Gospel, and pray that many would come to Christ. A new era of missions is developing, as believers in Africa, Europe, and Latin America are coming to us and saying, “We are ‘Brethren’—we are your brothers and sisters.” It is a healthy relationship, no longer like a parent and child, but more like an equal friendship or partnership.

These new relationships are maintained not only by occasional visits, but also with the benefit of the internet. Daily communication by methods like email, Facebook, and WhatsApp keep the connections strong. Together we grow in Christ. Together we are encouraged in our faith. Together we share the Gospel message. Together we are praising the Lord everywhere!

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