

**Psalm 47**

*For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.*

- 1 Clap your hands, all you nations;  
shout to God with cries of joy.***
- 2 How awesome is the LORD Most High,  
the great King over all the earth!***
- 3 He subdued nations under us,  
peoples under our feet.***
- 4 He chose our inheritance for us,  
the pride of Jacob, whom he loved. Selah***
- 5 God has ascended amid shouts of joy,  
the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.***
- 6 Sing praises to God, sing praises;  
sing praises to our King, sing praises.***
- 7 For God is the King of all the earth;  
sing to him a psalm of praise.***
- 8 God reigns over the nations;  
God is seated on his holy throne.***
- 9 The nobles of the nations assemble  
as the people of the God of Abraham,  
for the kings of the earth belong to God;  
he is greatly exalted.***

***6 Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises!*** Have you been singing along these past few weeks? I hope you have. While it might be a little strange to sing along with these online services, singing, even at home can be very beneficial for us and for our faith. It is good to sing praises to our God and - just think - now in the comfort of your home you are free to sing like no one else is watching or listening.

One of the things that my family and I have enjoyed doing during this extended time of staying at home is singing. In fact, the kids will often sing along to their favorite Christian radio station during breakfast. On more than one occasion we even turned up the music and sang and danced in the kitchen. Music is a special gift from God. Music and song have the power to lift up our spirits as we sing. It is quite literally a wonderful exercise that God has given to us that is a blessing to our health and faith.

Imagine for a moment the scene that the psalmist depicts here in Psalm 47. It is a scene that is even more joyous than a *Kuschel dance party*. Imagine that scene and know that by God's grace you are included. ***1 Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. 2 How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the***

***earth!... <sup>5</sup> God has ascended amid shouts of joy the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets. <sup>6</sup> Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises.***

Imagine a crowd of the faithful joining together with shouts of joy, with clapping hands, singing, rejoicing, and even dancing. It almost seems like a glimpse into heaven. But consider the scene as the psalmist would have encountered it, as God's people celebrated some great thing that he had done. Consider how God's people marched around the city of Jericho. Imagine the trumpet blasts and the shouts, and the joy and the utter exhilaration as the walls came crashing down. God had come down and done this marvelous thing. Consider the joyous cacophony of sound, the clapping, the shouting, the singing of praises to God Most High. Consider how that event was then remembered for years upon years with special arrangements of music and trumpets and how the people would sing praises to God for this wonderful thing that he had done and for the many other ways that he delivered his people. Remember other events and how they were celebrated with song. Recall how Moses and Mariam lifted a song of praise to God after he had delivered his people through the waters of the Red Sea. A lifting up of praise, that was uplifting for the people of God as they considered how the LORD had come down and done this great thing for his people. That is the powerful picture here displayed for us in this particular psalm, that God had come down from his throne, accomplished this wonderful feat for his people, and then ascended back to mount his holy throne amid songs of praise. If you look at the subtitle you will see that this psalm was actually written for the sons of Korah, who served for a time as the temple choir. This psalm was written for them so that they could sing the praises of our awesome God and lead the people in worship of their faithful and mighty God. Psalm 47 uses this imagery of God coming down accomplishing this great feat of rescue for his people and then ascending to his throne amid shouts of joy and songs of praise. Let all God's people praise him as the Lord continues his gracious rule on high.

How fitting we consider this psalm as we celebrate the ascension of our Lord. Consider the most marvelous thing that God had done for his people. The LORD had left his throne on high and he came down to deliver His people in their distress. He came to deliver his people from an enemy far worse than the Egyptians or the Assyrians, he came to deliver his people from sin and death and hell. God left his royal throne on high and he stooped down in the mess and mire of our world, and like he had done for his people of Israel time and time again, he subdued the enemies that vexed and plagued his people as he would trample upon them. Sing praises to God for the victory that he has won for us! The LORD Jesus, having lived a perfect life in our place, crushed the serpent's head by his death on the cross. The ultimate sacrifice for sin laid down, the price paid in full, freedom was fully purchased and won by his blood. And then death and the grave would lay trampled under his feet as the Lord Jesus rose from the grave, triumphant and victorious. Sing praises to God! God has come down and he has accomplished this great feat of rescue. He has become our salvation! And have accomplished this for us, it was time for Jesus to ascend to his royal throne.

As Jesus stood before his disciples on that hill near Bethany, we are told that he opened the minds of the disciples so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them how the Scriptures had promised that the Christ would suffer and die and rise

again. He explained to them that they were witnesses of these great things, and God would send them out into the world to share this message of repentance and forgiveness of sins and eternal life. God stood before this motley crew of ordinary men and made it clear to them that they would be his royal ambassadors to announce to the nations what great things he had done. And then he was lifted up into heaven before them. With arms outstretched in blessing he was lifted up to sit on his royal throne. And we are told that the disciples stared up into heaven for some time in such utter amazement and wonder that the angels had to break it up. But the celebration, did not end there, for we are told that they worshipped Jesus and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. There they stayed continually at the temple, praising God, and waiting for the gift of his Holy Spirit.

God had come down to accomplish this mighty feat and now he had ascended to his throne amid shouts of joy. Sing praises to God! Sing praises! ***How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth!*** How awesome is our God that he would win this victory! How awesome that he does this for us. Consider the blessings that he gives to those whom he has called and chosen to be his own and know that this includes you.

***Clap your hands, all you nations,*** the psalmist says this in anticipation of the spread of the gospel not just to people in Jerusalem, or to a small band outside of Bethany, but people of all nations, including you and me. But why would he choose me? Why would he choose us? Simply because he loved us. This too reveals the greatness of our God!

Why would he choose Abraham, who was far from perfect? Why would he choose Jacob who so lacked trust in God's promises and blessing that he tricked and his own blind and elderly father, and brought his brother's contempt on himself in such a way that he had to flee, cut off and alone from all that he knew and yet God chose him. The LORD watched over him, delivered, restored, and blessed this man. He made Jacob his heir and chose and prepared for him an inheritance that included far more than the promise of some slice of land for his descendants, but this promise included a place prepared for him in heaven. ***4 He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved.***

Sing praises to God! Sing praises! How awesome is the God Most High that he would come down and save sinners like us! Why would he call common fishermen like James and John? Why would he call a tax collector so despised by his fellow countrymen like Matthew? Why would he call alongside to himself a - speak first, think later - sinner like Peter, who would deny his Lord three times in Jesus' absolute hour of need? Because of his great and awesome love! In his amazing grace he chooses sinners like Jacob, like Matthew, like Peter, James, and John, and saved and changed their lives and filled them with this love. For by his grace those believers would sing his praises and proclaim his name, so that the glorious accounts of his goodness and love, the deeds of his kindness and deliverance, would be passed down to sinners like you and me. Sing praises to God! Clap your hands, all you nations! For in his great love God has rescued you. Despite all your sins, all the ways you and I deny our Lord with our words and actions, all our foolish talk and sinful words, and unfaithful actions, God chose you

and me. In his grace has made you his own child and an heir of everlasting life. He has defeated sin and death and the grave for you, and he has promised and prepared for you a place in his heaven! Because he lives, you too shall, live! He will come back on the clouds just as he left and take us to be with him! He has rescued us from eternal death and has blessed us with life eternal! ***Sing praises to God, sing praises!*** And know dear friends that this great and all-powerful God who came down and has shown us sinners so much grace, he is the one is still very much seated on his throne and he reigns over all the earth. God reigns over the nations. God is seated on his holy throne. All things belong to him! He is in control. He will watch over his people. He will guide and protect and govern the nations, even now!

God has given his church a great blessing in his gift of song and music. It is a joy to sing God's praises in church, but let's admit it, we are usually not that animated in worship. While Lutherans understand the wonderful power of praise and song in worship and have a wonderful heritage of hymns that proclaim the wondrous works of God, we don't exactly express ourselves with unbridled joy when we sing praises in church. But here's the thing, you aren't in church today! You are at home. So today, I want to unleash a little bit. Sing like no one's watching! Praise your God! Sing praises to God! Sing Praises! Maybe on the next hymn turn me down a little bit and let it rip and fill the room with your voice of praise! Maybe after the service is over, stay on YouTube and search for your favorite song of praise and sing along - I've posted at least one song on our website that you can follow and sing along with - maybe if you are up for it, get up and dance or clap your hands or tap your feet. The Lord has blessed us with eternal joys and daily blessings! Though we are sinners, he chose us and has prepared for us blessings eternal. He promises to be with us every day and always, until the very end of the age. Dear friends, sing praises to God, sing praises!

In these crazy and uncertain times, when the clouds and storms of life gather it is easy to become discouraged and down. To make things worse there seems to be this quicksand of confusion and fear and uncertainty that is all around us, waiting at every turn, wanting to drain us of the joy that Christ has given, but the LORD in his goodness lifts us up. And one of the ways that he does this is with his gift of music and song!

Sing praises to God and proclaim the wonders that he has done. In love he came down to accomplish our salvation and has ascended to sit on his holy throne. Even in our pain and sorrow he lifts our sorrowing souls that they may sing. So go ahead and sing! Sing praises to God! Sing Praises!

He brings joy to the nations! In love he chose you to be an heir of salvation! And that same Lord Jesus Christ reigns over all the earth! Alleluia!