

# ***“Until You’re Breathless”***

Robert M. Thompson, Pastor

**Corinth Reformed Church**  
150 Sixteenth Avenue NW  
Hickory, North Carolina 28601  
828.328.6196 [corinthtoday.org](http://corinthtoday.org)

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***If you have no other reason than that you’re breathing, Let God shine, y’all!***

***Psalm 150***

***December 29, 2019***

(Corinth sermons are available in audio and print forms at [corinthtoday.org/sermons](http://corinthtoday.org/sermons).)

***A year to remember***

What will you remember from 2019? Maybe it was your best year ever. Maybe it was your worst year ever. At least one Corinth family experienced the best and the worst all in the same year.

As a church body, our highlight was celebrating our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I’d like you to turn to your neighbor and share the most memorable part of that celebration. To prompt you a bit, here are some brief reminders of how we celebrated: movie night on the lawn, anniversary shirts, tent revival, 150 Hickory churches, Hallelujah Chorus, museum, Jeremiah Ingold’s buggy, Christmas ornaments, big dinner on the lawn, history movie, history booklet, brush arbor, covenant renewal, 150 Days of Prayer, sermons on 1 Corinthians, Corinth Legacy capital campaign, mission grants to Safe Harbor and Habitat for Humanity, mayor’s proclamation, Art Museum exhibit, children’s games, Scavenger Hunt, cook books, and what else did I miss?

Take a couple of minutes, introduce yourself to those around you, and share your highlight with two or three people.

***Let God shine, y’all!***

I find myself wondering who wrote Psalm 150, and why. Then I quickly realize that one of the reasons we’re not told is because we shouldn’t limit this psalm or our praise to certain people or situations. There’s a reason this psalm was placed at the end of the whole book. It’s the summit, the culmination, the zenith.

The psalm begins and ends with the same word. In English: “Praise the LORD.” In Hebrew, possibly the most familiar biblical word in any language: “Hallelujah.” Here’s a fact I bet you didn’t know. The word “Hallelujah” never occurs in the New Living Translation of the Bible, and only once in the New International Version – in Revelation 19:1.

The word “Hallelujah” has three parts, which we’ll take from back to front. “Jah” is short for “Yahweh,” the name of God. The “lu” in the middle is the second personal pronoun; in correct southern English, “y’all.” The first part comes from the Hebrew “halal,” which literally means “to shine.” It’s used in various ways in the Hebrew Bible, sometimes negatively, as in “to boast.” Most often, it means “to praise.”

When we put the three words together, “Hallelujah” means, “Let God shine, y’all!” About 15 of the Psalms are “Hallelujah” psalms, meaning they begin or end (or both) with this exclamation.

The most obvious way to outline Psalm 150 is still the best. In between the “Hallelujahs” at the beginning and end, the psalm answers four questions about making God shine – Where? Why? How? and Who?

Where? (v. 1) There are two answers: “in his sanctuary” and “in his mighty heavens.” For the Jew, the sanctuary was the temple in Jerusalem – a physical place with prescribed worship ways and times. It was with the gathered people of God, where formal worship united voices and hearts. This form of the word “Heavens” occurs only here and in Genesis 1 (three times). It refers to the great expanse above us – unknown to the ancients and unfathomable to us. That’s why it’s “mighty” – a symbol of God’s creative and limitless strength.

Where do we praise the Lord? In the designated places (like church), and everywhere we find ourselves in and under his wonderful creation, let God shine, y’all!

Why? (v. 2) Again, two answers. “for his acts of power” and “for his surpassing greatness.” The Hallelujah Psalms sometimes recount specific ways God has acted in faithfulness to Israel. Psalms 105-106 read like our history booklet or history video, retelling the key events of God’s covenant faithfulness and provision – “his acts of power” that created and sustain his people. What has God done for you specifically, for your family, your country, your church, the Church? Let God shine, y’all!

But don’t be so focused on your story or the story of your people that you forget that even when your story doesn’t seem very praise-worthy, God still is. “His surpassing greatness” is his character apart from anything he has done for you or for anyone else. These two words mean almost the same thing. It’s like saying to praise God for his great greatness, or his excellent excellence or his magnified magnificence. It’s who he is – unsurpassed, incomparable, unrivaled.

How? (vv. 3-5). Now the psalm lists a whole series of musical instruments – “the trumpet” is the shofar, normally used by priests. It didn’t play tunes as much as call worshipers to attention or soldiers into battle. The “harp” and “lyre” were also used by Levites (1 Chronicles 25:1). The “timbrel” was normally played by women, and “dancing” was more often associated with women. “Strings and pipe” were for lay people, and the “cymbals” were used for accompaniment.

Honestly, though, the distinctions are not that important. The “how” basically means however you can. Whatever you can employ. Percussion or melodic instruments, blasts or tender notes, loud or soft, sitting still or standing tall, clergy or laity, men or women, young or old, with whatever you have, traditional or contemporary, skilled or just banging it out, Let God shine, y’all!

Who? (v. 6). The NIV says, “Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.” Literally, “Let all the breath praise the Lord.” If you’re breathing, you qualify. If you’ve had a great year, Let God shine, y’all! If you’ve endured a year from hell, Let God shine, y’all! If you have a specific reason, Let God shine, y’all! If you have no other reason than the fact that you’re still breathing and you know he’s the reason, Let God shine, y’all! Until you’re breathless, Let God shine, y’all!

***Pastor Paul***

The balance of the sermon was delivered by Pastor Paul Cummings. You may hear the audio at [corinthtoday.org/sermons](http://corinthtoday.org/sermons) or [Facebook.com/CorinthReformed](https://www.facebook.com/CorinthReformed).