

The voice of the Lord

The psalm appointed for today – Psalm 29 – is a psalm written by David, himself a king, to his king, the Lord, calling all heavenly beings and all people on earth to listen to God and to give him glory. Kings are used to being heard – to being obeyed – to people replying when he’s told them to jump saying ‘how high?’. The psalm was possibly written for worship at the time of the festival of tabernacles – the autumn or fall harvest time when people lived in temporary shelters or booths (tabernacles) when people were particularly noting of and thankful for God’s continual care of his creation – after all, he gave the harvest – and the psalm calls people to listen to God for he is powerful over water and land. Using the term ‘voice of the Lord’ seven times, David certainly presents a most powerful God who is in their midst. Listen.

¹*Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.*

²*Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
worship the Lord in the splendour of holiness.*

³*The voice of the Lord is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the Lord, over many waters.*

⁴*The voice of the Lord is powerful;
the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.*

⁵*The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars;
the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.*

⁶*He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf,
and Sirion like a young wild ox.*

⁷*The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire. ⁸The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness;
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.*

⁹*The voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth
and strips the forests bare,
and in his temple all cry, “Glory!”*

¹⁰*The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;
the Lord sits enthroned as king forever.*

¹¹*May the Lord give strength to his people!
May the Lord bless his people with peace! (Psalm 29 ESV)*

See the power? Wander through time from creation to David’s to ours? Think of God still speaking?

We are here this morning because God is still speaking and to get us out of bed, to get us following someone else as Lord when our sinful selves still keep trying to turn us back to the idolatry of self means that there must be power. We are here this morning because Mark wrote:

And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased”.
(Mark 1:11 ESV)

In this case we’re eavesdropping because the voice was speaking to Jesus, just baptised in the river Jordan by John the Baptist. Jesus, the Word made flesh who tabernacled among us, is being baptised by John whose business was preparing the way for the Lord, whose baptism was for repentance, Jesus dripping like all the other sinners John has baptised hears a voice

from heaven, of course its God the Father, and he's telling Jesus that Jesus is pleased with his beloved Son.

We don't see the power that David's 'voice of the Lord' suggested – the thunder, the majesty, the breaking of cedars, the jumping with fright, the fire – today we see a dripping man walk out of the river and into a public ministry. Sure his ministry has lightning flashes of the miraculous but often it was ordinary or controversial as more and more people became divided by him. It got to the point that Jesus could raise the dead Lazarus – now that's some powerful voice! – and one group of people could praise him and God and another group could plot his death!

However God's voice was silent and his back turned into darkness when Jesus cried out on the cross in his God forsakenness and that is where the world leaves Jesus – a failed voice, a pretender, a fake, a fraud.

We are here today because we have heard the wonderful news of what happened next – more than heard – these words – angelic at first, feminine next, and then male and female in increasing dialects and accents and languages – have amazing power for their kill and make alive, they give faith, they are wrapped in water, they are eaten in bread and wine and god is making as new creation – that's why we're here this morning!

Jesus has stepped into our homes, our temporary shelters, our bodies, and given us his Word – his life and light – and now we live and see – God's glory, our ongoing sinfulness and need for daily repentance, God's grace and forgiveness. This isn't just for this hour on Sunday but for 24/7 as we listen for the voice of the Lord in words, water, bread and wine. God is speaking to us and ,like David, those who see this Jesus say 'Glory!' and live in the Lord's strength and blessing no matter what the world is doing to us.