

“Life is for Praising”

Living The Good Life Lenten Series
Psalm 111 & 1 Corinthians 10:31-33
Rev. James Ramsey ~ March 30, 2014

Much of what we do in life we do in order to gain something else.

We work so we get paid and we can feed our families and pay our bills. We do homework so we get credit toward good grades. We follow the speed limit in order to avoid a ticket.



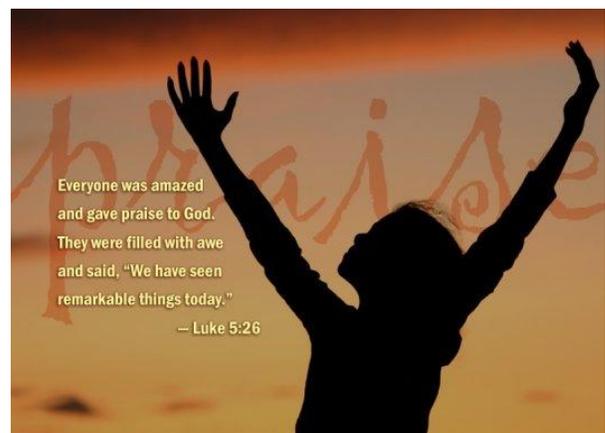
We brush our teeth to avoid tooth decay. We do a favor so that

people will think well of us. We pay our taxes so we get government services, police protection, schools, roads and bridges. You do something...you get something.

But praising God is different. We praise God because God is great and God deserves our praise. God created the earth, the heavens, the seas and all that is in them! We praise God because God loves us from the rising of the sun to its setting. We don't praise to gain anything from God. We don't praise to tell God what we want. We don't have an "agenda" that we want to convey. We praise God without regard for our wants or needs or desired gains.

We praise God with our whole heart simply because God is God!

Life is for praising!





We are given the gift of life. We receive that gift—and all the gifts we experience in life—from God. God is the source and fountain of all goodness for us. So, life is for praising. We praise God for being God. The true life...the Good Life...arises from praising God. A life without praise is no life at all.

The famous first question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism – a document from the time of the Protestant Reformation (1647) that remains part of our Presbyterian Book of Confessions, asks “What is humanity’s chief end?” The answer is “to glorify God and enjoy him forever.”



A little boy once got the answer wrong when he said humanity's chief end was to “glorify God and endure him forever.” But some of us get the answer wrong, too. Does it seem, sometimes, that you are enduring God?

At least the little boy got the “to glorify God” part correct. The Apostle Paul gives us an umbrella, a comprehensive prescription for the good life: Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

This is far-reaching and all-inclusive. All of life belongs to God. The Psalmist proclaims: Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!

As spring begins finally to unfold, imagine that creation is praising the LORD. The birds are singing. The trees are budding. Last night I saw a frog jumping across the road – on the warm evenings to come even the frogs will be singing. I imagine they are praising the LORD. Life is for praising.



There is a forgotten seventeenth century hymn that would be mighty hard for us to sing today, but its author conveyed this sense of everything that has breath can praise the LORD. What animal does the hymn reference?

Ye monsters of the briny deep,
Your Maker's praises spout;
Up from the deep ye codlings peep,
And wag your tails about.



The song of the humpback whale is one of the strangest in nature. It is an eerie combination of high- and low-pitched groaning. Scientists who have studied the humpback whale say their songs are noteworthy because these giants of the deep are continually changing them.



New patterns are added and old ones eliminated so that over a period of time the whale actually sings a whole new song. Are we, as God's people, continually composing new songs of praise? – As we experience new and fresh blessings, mercies, miracles of God? I suggest we learn from the birds, from the frogs...from the Humpbacks.

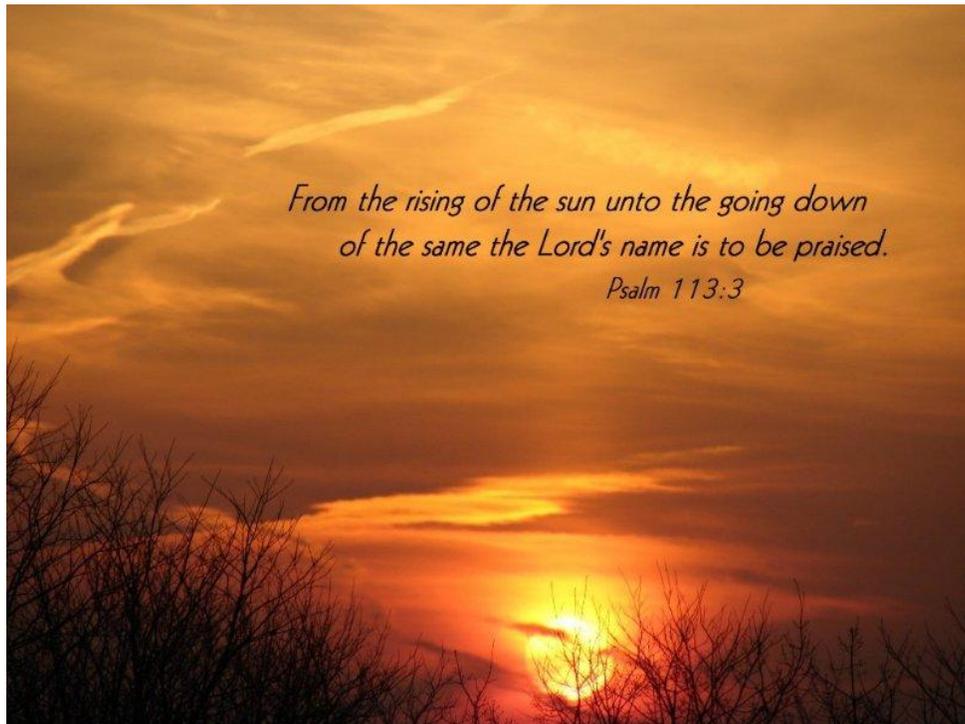
We cannot always, or even often, control events, but we can control how we respond to them. When things happen to us which dismay or appall, we look to God for meaning, for reassurance, for hope and rescue. We remember that God cannot be flustered or outflanked, nor can God's purposes be ultimately thwarted. What God hopes for is those who will praise him, who will trust him, who will follow him.



This is our first and foremost responsibility: to glorify God. No matter where we are or what circumstances we face – even given life's worst reversals and tragedies, our response can be praise --- not for the pain or the wrong certainly, but for God, for the One who was and is and is to come – and for our absolute faith that God has a good future for us.



God's will is being accomplished and, therefore, we are living the good life, a life full of praise.



*From the rising of the sun unto the going down
of the same the Lord's name is to be praised.
Psalm 113:3*