

Ready for the Lord  
Psalm 149  
November 7, 2021

As this Psalm was read this morning, did you catch the change it seems in the focus of the Psalm? It begins with "Praise the Lord." Yet when it gets to verse 7, it uses the words, "executing judgement". We know that the Bible talks about those in heaven wanting God to judge the world, wanting those who have brought death and destruction on believers to finally get theirs but these verses seem to be saying we are to take up two edged swords against those who have been against God and His Word.

The study Bible points out a couple of people who took it just that way. One was Thomas Munzer, in Luther's day who urged peasants to take up arms, hence the term Peasants War, where peasants took up arms against their masters, hoping to bring in the Kingdom of God and a few generations later, Caspar Scioppus, used this same text in the Thirty Years war where Roman Catholics were urged to take up arms against the Lutheran Princes. They took the verse to mean a literal two edged sword and yet when that term is used, in the time after Jesus, it points to something different as in this verse from **Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**

God's Word is the two edged sword the sword we look to today. Ours is not a normal war, it is as Paul wrote to the **Ephesians 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.**

It is not flesh and blood but what is going on inside that flesh and blood that we see come out in the flesh but it is in the way they are thinking that needs to have the double edged sword of the Law and Gospel to come into play. They need to be confronted with the Law. They need to be "woke" as to their sinfulness and once that is made plain by the Holy Spirit, then and only then should we bring in the Good News of the Gospel. Until the Law does its work of cutting through that hard shell they have built up in their minds and hearts, the Gospel is only enabling them to put their sin on the back burner and point to the Love of Jesus as their source of security. They, until they have been convicted of their sin are like those who complained that they never left

Jesus alone in prison when confronted that they had not treated their neighbor as they would Jesus.

Yes, the Lord had those in the Psalmists Day, take on the enemies of God. They were used to go to war against their enemies. Somewhat like the Muslims of today that say they are doing the Lord's Work, Israelites under the command of the real God, took on nations with virtual two edged swords. That is why the writer to the Hebrews points to spiritual warfare since Jesus took His Flesh and blood to the cross to die for all.

So, you don't need to go out to a medieval reenactment to get a sword to do the Lord's Work to execute judgement on the nations and punishments on the people. No, it is not that so how do you then get ready for the Lord and His work through you?

If the sword is Law and Gospel, then it must mean that you must know Law and Gospel. How do you do that? Paul's second letter to Timothy states: **2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.**

The, "rightly handling of the word of truth", is the focus. The word for handle in the Greek is actually "to cut" or "to cut straight". So in cutting, accurately handling the word, not mixing Law and Gospel is the challenge.

As you know from Catechism class the Old Testament is not all Law and the New Testament is not all Gospel. In fact there are verses that have both law and gospel in the same verse. To put it simply, we know the Law points to what we do or need to do and the Gospel points to the Lord and His doing, not ours. That is the general rule.

We praise the Lord for what He has done, especially for choosing us to be a part of His family and the fact that He came to earth to take on our flesh and live a perfect life, and then go to the cross and die for our sins, then rise from the grave and ascend bodily to heaven, where we too will find ourselves as well.

The Lord's high praises should be in your throats as the two edged sword of the Law and Gospel us in your hands to use to help your neighbor know God and His Savior, Jesus Christ.

The going to your neighbor with the Law and hopefully the Gospel is really the high praise of God. In order to bring the Law and Gospel to them, it may take some other work, to get them to the place where the Law and then the Gospel can be utilized.

It is going to take some work. How do you do the work you do today? You may say that you are retired but what occupies your day? Is it all play or is there some

WORK? How are you able to do that? Did you just know how to do it all when you were born? What took place before you got to this place in your life where you could get up and get to work? You had to learn how to do it and do it in a way that you could and would do the work before you. Just like play, you need to know the rules and then develop the talent you have been given to make it the best to take on those out there who you may come up against.

In play it is generally physical but as was said earlier, this is NOT a physical war, but a spiritual war. We need to get past the physical and deal with what is going on inside in those bodies we encounter with the truth of God's Word, the whole truth, the Law and the Gospel.

The Psalmist talks of chains and fetters of iron but then looks to words, words of judgement that because they can't get away, you can go to those who have been stopped with the judgement, judgement written, which in our case is the judgement of the Law so that they will be ready to listen to the Gospel.

So in order to be able to deal with others, you need to learn what is the best way for you to deal with the work of bringing the Good News to others. When you clean house, a clean house is the goal. Is there some "dirty" work that needs to be done before the house is once again clean.

What is the "dirty" work that needs to be done as you live out your faith? That depends on your skills at this work. Maybe you don't have much to point to as practice or training that you have had to go through in this. You may not know where to start. The thing is, is, you are a Christian. What is your story? What is your history? What do you know about your faith? When you talk with others, do you know their story? What questions could you ask or will certain topics lead you in that direction with them? Yes, you may actually have to sit down and think about it, write down what you would say or ask and **how** you would do it.

How many of you just were pulled out of your crib on day and as you were sat down on the floor you got up and ran into the next room? No one did it that way. Each of you probably crawled first and then tried to stand up and walk, some by holding onto walls or something else to help out. You fell, got up, fell, got up, fell, got up and number of times until the falling got to be less than the getting up to where now you may have to make a concerted effort to NOT fall or you may never get up again.

What happens if you fail? Will you die? Will you be embarrassed? Maybe but what happens when the horse throws you, you get right back on. You are still who you are. You are still a human. Humans are known to make mistakes or to do things in a way that may not be perfect but you still get up and go each day. It is no different with the Word of God telling others in a way you are comfortable with as you tell of your high praises of God.

You have been given by God with something so valuable to you and yet how many times were you almost selfish with it as if you fed it to them you would get it spilled all over you? Have you only thought of their taking it wrongly or has you thought always been on the thought that they are going to listen and ask questions you may not have learned YET. Note: I said YET because how could you handle the unknown answer to the question? Might you say, "that is a good question I hadn't looked at before but I will do some studying on it and get back with you."

We think of Jesus, He knew the answer to the questions. Yes, He was perfect, so He would know but each of you has been given the Holy Spirit and God's Word in your own language to help you as you learn God's Word and the answers to the questions that people will come up with.

Do you feel convicted? Yes, we all should and yet why did you come here today to receive? You wanted to hear from God's Word and this being the 1st Sunday of the Month you wanted, once again to have His promise put into flesh and blood as we partake of His very body and blood in His meal for us.

You come to receive from Him. He provides the fuel for your spiritual bodies to wage war, not in the normal way but in a spiritual way.

Are you ready for the Lord to use you? He knows you better than you know yourselves so might He then use you in a way YOU are in tune with? He will walk before you to prepare the way for you as you do the work of letting others know of a more perfect way.

The Psalmist wanted the people of God to let the high praises of God to be in their throats and the two-edged sword in their hands. Yes, we see that there needs to be something in our throats and something in our hands to execute, not the vengeance needed in Old Testament times but the vengeance that will come about if the people continue to reject their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and His salvation given for them.