

Sermon Text – Sunday, October 26, 2025 – Pastor Paula Kraus

1st Reading: Jeremiah 14:1-10, 19-22; 2nd Reading: Luke 18:9-14
Scripture for Message: Psalm 65 “Everything Sings”

In addition to what we just read, I want to share some scripture from the book of the prophet Joel. This is from Joel 2:23-28, some of this is familiar to you.

²³ O children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in the Lord your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain, as before.

²⁴ The threshing floors shall be full of grain, the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.

²⁵ I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent against you.

²⁶ You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

²⁷ You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I, the Lord, am your God and there is no other. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

²⁸ Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

³² Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved;
(May God Bless the reading of this scripture)

I don't usually preach from the book of Psalm – I don't know why. Most of the Psalms lend themselves to the call to worship and the message comes across in that way but Psalm sixty-five highlights a theme of God's goodness, grace, and power that calls out to be preached! Coupled with the words of the prophet Joel, we get a message of divine sovereignty and God's desire for the good of all creation. These two scriptures, read together, offer us visions of a restored earth and the redemption of God's people.

Have any of you just sat in nature and silently praised God for all the wonder God created? Either in your gardens or in the setting of one of our many parks, maybe taking a hike or a beach stroll – there are so many wonders right in front of our eyes if we care to look. This time of year, our seasons are changing, we are probably at the end of the colorful foliage season but further south the trees are

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displaying their splendor. I recently drove through the area of Rickett's Glen State Park and over Red Rock Mountain, it was a beautiful day, and the aspen were displaying their glorious golden glory at the top of the mountain – what a time to praise God for God's creation. The Psalmist writes that God crowns the year with bounty. It is harvesting season, in a month we will celebrate our bounty, God's bountiful provisions, in feasts of Thanksgiving, giving thanks to God for all God has done. It is right and just to give thanks.

In the Psalm we just read the Psalmist begins by expressing praise and awe for God. The God who answers prayer, who forgives our transgressions. The God who answers us with deliverance and salvation – the God who is the hope of all the earth. The Psalmist acknowledges God who established the mountains, silenced the roaring of the seas and the tumult of the people. Expressing awe and praise for the God who orders our days. This Psalm comes across as praise for creation, for the way God cares for the earth by watering its furrows, enriching the earth to bring forth bounty and creation responds with joy, overflowing with richness. This is a rich statement of joy for all that God provides. I wonder what in the world inspired the Psalmist to use such images to express joy and praise. Maybe it was just the act of opening one's eyes to perceive the wonders of our world.

Turning to the Old Testament reading from Jeremiah we find a community feeling that God has rejected them yet they acknowledge their transgressions. In this communal prayer of confession and lament, Jeremiah shares the people's concerns and implores God to be gracious and merciful – much like the tax collector's prayer in our reading from Luke – "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" As the people, in this scripture from Jeremiah, acknowledge their wickedness and the iniquity of their ancestors they offer praise to the faithfulness of God who brings the rains that water the earth bringing forth abundance. Why should they, or any of us for that matter, expect good things from a God they and we choose to ignore and are disrespectful toward? How can they / we expect God's charity when they / we choose to ignore God's claims on our lives? The reading from Jeremiah reveals the God that brings hope even through periods of deep national struggle.

Joel's message too is one of restoration and renewal. After a time of national struggle with swarming locusts destroying crops, they now shall be repaid, they will eat in plenty and be satisfied with threshing floors full of grain and vats overflowing with wine and oil. This is a message of praise for the God who provides. The images from these words should remind us of God's goodness. They remind me of a

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community looking toward restoration. A community placing hope in God's promises, "You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I, the Lord, am your God and there is no other. And my people shall never again be put to shame." Oh, how I wish we had that hope in our world today, oh how I wish the people of this society could [or would] praise God in that manner.

The Psalmist writes "Happy are those whom you choose and bring near to live in your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, your holy temple." We don't seem to find satisfaction in many things these days – maybe we have become so worn-out and cynical by all we are given that only more will satisfy. Present company excepted, many people don't stop to give thanks, even when we sit around the family table at the Thanksgiving feast, we don't often offer thanks to God. Sure, we express gratitude for what we have, the nice house, the new car, the new clothes, the success at work but to whom do we offer thanks? You've heard the expression there is no "I" in team, well there is no "I" in thanks either. Few of us remember to give praise that is due to God who answers our prayers.

Our God is the creator of all things, our scriptures begin with the words, "In the beginning, GOD created the heavens and earth." This simply must be something that causes us to stop and look at things with different eyes. God created richness and abundance, God created meadows, forests, arid deserts, valleys, mountains, seas, and rivers. God created Elephants, Crocodiles, birds, and mammals, and God created everything that we can consume and use for the wellbeing of all the people in all the places of this great globe called Earth. For that reason, everything sings. In all this there is enough of what is needed for survival. God created everything that all creatures need and there is much more left to be discovered in God's creation.

The scriptures that are read toward the end of the Church calendar year, remind us that God poured out God's Spirit in all the seasons and on all the earth – not just the church or even humanity – but on all creation. Our eyes must look beyond ourselves because these words remind us that "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." When you read these words from the Psalmist and from the prophet Joel there is a cosmic scope to them. The Psalmist depicts the whole earth enriched and all of creation singing together for joy.

One commentary pairs this Psalm with Joel's words. When Joel writes of God's promise to "pour out my spirit on all flesh; the psalmist responds "O you who answers prayer! To you all flesh shall come." In Joel people everywhere will

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“dream dreams” and “see visions;” the psalmist exclaims: “Those who live at earth’s farthest bounds are awed by your signs.” Also, “just as Joel suggests that “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” the psalmist bears witness to God’s mighty acts of redemption: “By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation.”¹

What is the message in this for the church? I believe these words should inspire the knowledge that God is good, in all things God’s purpose is redemption and restoration. God loves and cares for each of us as part of God’s care for all of creation. God desires good things for all creation and brings abundance in forgiveness, grace, mercy, and salvation – for the entire world. The right response from God’s people should be awe and praise, should be reverence and respect – not only for God but for all of creation. I wonder if because all the blessings that God abundantly provides, we should be on our knees giving thanks.

These words reflect divine sovereignty, God’s power over the elements and God’s establishment of the earth’s order as expressions of God’s righteous authority. These words present a universal vision of God’s salvation and a call for all nations to turn to God – something we hear in most of the prophet’s words. There is in these words an expression of joy and praise, hope and redemption, which culminates in a universal call for creation to celebrate God’s glory.

Take a few moments this week to look at the wonders of creation, and to consider the awesome deeds of a glorious and gracious God. Consider all the blessings, even the trivial things that come to us unexpectedly as blessings. Know that the words of this Psalm are true – “When deeds of iniquity overwhelm us, you forgive our transgressions.” Take note too that the Psalmist acknowledges God who silences the tumult of the peoples – that phrase in this Psalm that praises the harvest and all of creation is often overlooked. Our God is the God who calms not only stormy seas but also the stormy hearts of God’s beloved people.

¹ David Gambrell. “Connecting the Psalm with Scripture and Worship.” *Connections: Year c, Vol 3.* eds. Green, Long, Powery, & Rigby. WJK. 2019. Print. 414-416.