

March 17, 2017

The Rev. Dr. L. Roger Owens, Associate Professor of Christian Spirituality and Ministry, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

Scripture

Psalm 148

- ¹ Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!
- ² Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his host!
- ³ Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars!
- ⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!
- ⁵ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for he commanded and they were created.
- ⁶ He established them forever and ever;
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.
- ⁷ Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,
- ⁸ fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!
- ⁹ Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!
- ¹⁰ Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!
- ¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!
- ¹² Young men and women alike,
old and young together!
- ¹³ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.
- ¹⁴ He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him.
Praise the Lord!

Devotional

Lent is a season of penitence. We engage in self-examination and seek forgiveness; we remember that we are humans, from “humus”—the earth.

And yet in the midst of Lent, Psalm 148 intrudes as a reminder: We are still a people of praise. We may have buried the “Alleluias,” but we don’t need to forget what God has done. God has created and

established all that is—including us. And so the psalm calls all of creation—sea monsters, fruit trees, mountains—to praise, which it can't not do. By its very existence, creation praises God.

That's what makes us different from the rest of creation. We can choose to turn away from our ultimate purpose—to worship, glorify, and enjoy God. In Lent we remember our habit of turning away from our true end and what God did in Christ to turn us back.

And so even in Lent, let us dare to let praise slip from our lips. Let's not leave the mountains and fruit trees to rejoice alone.

Prayer

Forgiving God, we praise you for the work of creation, but most especially for the work of re-creating us in Christ, for forgiving us our sins and turning us back to the direction of our true purpose and end—to praise you forever. This we pray in the name of Christ, our Savior. Amen.