

Hallelujah

02/19/17

Psalm 147:1

Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.

There is a Hebrew word that is translated and used in the Bible that refers to praising God; it is ‘Hallelujah’. From the Greek translation we have “alleluia”, and it means precisely the same thing. It refers to an act of lifting our thanks and love to God – to celebrate, adulate, worship, acclaim, admire, and speak highly of God. *Hallelujah* means to give our approval, adoration, and appreciation to the Divine One.

Among many Protestant congregations an exuberant and unsolicited exhortation of “Hallelujah” is an acceptable means of expressing joy and thanks and praise in response to something good. Literally it means “Let us praise God.” Different Bible versions offer alternate translations of the words to our bible verse. The Holman Christian Standard Bible gives us: *Hallelujah! How good it is to sing to our God, for praise is pleasant and lovely.* The Lexham English bible renders the verse as: *Praise Yah. For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant; praise is fitting.* ‘Yah’ is a shortening of the Tetragrammaton, which are the four Hebrew symbols that represented the name of God. We translate the letters as YHWH, which some people have rendered as Yahweh or Jehovah.

And one last offering from the Wycliffe translation: *Alleluia.*
Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing to him; let our praises be joyful, and pleasing to our God.

In modern times it is not uncommon to hear someone express “Hallelujah” in happiness for something good they have been waiting for and have attained. In the song “Get Happy” the lyrics tell us: Forget your troubles, come on get happy; you better chase all your cares away. Shout hallelujah. Come on, get happy ; get ready for the judgment day. [Sing the song by Ted Koehler/Harold Arlen from 1930.]

There is a deep connection with the word “Hallelujah” and our spiritual natures. Our souls long for a spiritual connection, call out to God for connection. When we feel a response and feel the inner knowing that Spirit is within us and moving through us our lips want to express the excitement and gratitude that we feel. This is the word that David came up with to express those feelings.

But there is more than just a religious nature to our feelings. God has created a Universe where we indwell a body for a period of time. We are connected to the physical plane as surely as we are to the spiritual plane. We are comprised of both natures: physical and spiritual, and we must find the balance in order to find happiness.

So not only do we yearn for a connection with God and the spiritual energies, but we also crave a connection with each other and this physical earth we find ourselves in. We seek spiritual relationships as well as human relationships, and finding our balance and walking a steady path is at times difficult.

Jesus certainly found this balance between his physical and spiritual natures. He was a friend, a son, a carpenter, a teacher He loved, got upset, was determined, humble, and was willing. He experienced all the emotions that you or I feel, yet he was keenly aware of his divine nature and his relationship with God.

We will have those moments when we are completely engulfed by Spirit and other moments when we are totally immersed in earthly, secular, human experiences. Our goal as we walk this earth is to find balance within those experiences. We cannot eliminate our earthly nature, nor should we strive to do so. We are here with bodies right now for a reason, and I do not believe it is God's design that we arbitrarily flee these bodies and race back to pure Spirit. God has given us an opportunity to learn, grow, and develop while having a body.

My heart tells me that one reason for these bodies is to realize that in physical form or spiritual form we have one Source and one Creator, providing life, peace, joy, love, lessons, and guidance. The joy that we feel in the Presence of Divinity is the same joy we feel in the presence of our loved ones. It is the same energy of Love.

The energy of gratitude that we feel when we receive a gift from someone we love is the same energy of gratitude that we feel when we receive a gift from God. The Christ within us is ever present whether we are floating in the bliss of God or struggling with a difficult human challenge.

The lesson to learn during our walk on earth is plainly written in 1 Thessalonians: *give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

Be thankful in all circumstance; praise God in every situation. Keep a ‘hallelujah’ ready for every situation. It is seeing past our judgments and our interpretations of what we are experiencing and seeing the Love of God in everything – even if it is only to seek God’s comfort, assurance, and guidance. Perhaps we are being led to stop focusing on our earthly condition and move our focus toward our spiritual natures and raise our thinking above our challenges.

When we can rise above our earthly struggles we can exclaim “Hallelujah” amidst chaos and confusion. We can affirm that the energy of hate has no power over us, when we have risen above hatred through the love of our God. By uttering “Hallelujah” we begin to see our challenges within a larger context of who we are, whose we are, where we are, and what is to be done. Through the Christ we have all the power, courage, strength, and abilities to see us through whatever we face.

Yet, we know how difficult our challenges can be, and all that we can do is the best we can in every moment. Sometimes our hallelujahs are strong and confident; sometime they will be feeble, timid, and uncertain. But the challenge is to continue exclaiming “Hallelujah” in every situation.

Ephesians 5:19-20 teaches us to: “Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We may not

know what is going on or why, but we can trust in God's perfect plans for us.

Leonard Cohen was a Canadian, singer, songwriter, poet, artist, and author. He wrote about our human and divine natures and the conflicts they bring as we seek balance. He wrote:

The only moment that you can live here comfortably in these absolutely irreconcilable conflicts is in this moment when you embrace it all. Look, I don't understand a 'bleeping' thing at all; Hallelujah! That's the only moment that we live here fully as human beings.

Open your mouth and you throw open your arms and you embrace the thing and you just say, "Hallelujah! Blessed is the name."

We are told in Psalm 150:6 *Let everything that has breath, praise the Lord.* I have to remember that it doesn't say "Let everything that has breath and is going through good times, praise the Lord."

The Christ waits to bring us enlightenment as we release our fears and doubts, and the trappings of the human condition. Whatever we experience we can endure, learn from, release its hurts, and move on toward the Light of God.

It is my prayer that we find the awareness and the willingness to praise God in all situations. May grateful adulation escape our hearts at all times until our life becomes one great "Hallelujah".

Let us pray....