

5/17/12 & 6/4/12 (Ascension, GLDC) Sermon – Psalm 47 | Ascension Batavia | GLDC

Grace to you and peace be multiplied, from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **Psalm 47 (NKJV)**

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.

- 1** Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph!
- 2** For the Lord Most High is awesome; He is a great King over all the earth.
- 3** He will subdue the peoples under us, And the nations under our feet.
- 4** He will choose our inheritance for us, The excellence of Jacob whom He loves. Selah
- 5** God has gone up with a shout, The Lord with the sound of a trumpet.
- 6** Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
- 7** For God is the King of all the earth; Sing praises with understanding.
- 8** God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne.
- 9** The princes of the people have gathered together, The people of the God of Abraham.  
For the shields of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted.

## **GOD HAS ASCENDED WITH A SHOUT!**

In Jesus name, dear fellow pilgrims in Christ,

Joshua fought the battle of Jericho. Right? That's how the song goes after all. Was it really Joshua who fought this battle? What was it that made it possible for a single shout of the children of Israel to bring down the mighty walls of Jericho?

**Joshua 6:20 (NKJV) — 20 So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.**

This Ascension season we shout! As we find in verse v.1, **Shout to God with the voice of triumph!** In much the same fashion as God descended upon the land of Canaan and, with a shout, brought down the nations that opposed Him ... in much the same way as God then ascended to His Temple Mount in Jerusalem to establish His dwelling place among His Old Testament people ... in much the same way, we see our Lord Jesus ascending to His throne in heaven. With a shout He has brought down the walls of the Law, with a shout He has torn down those who oppose Him, with a shout He has ascended to His throne on high to establish a spiritual dwelling place, ruling in the hearts of His chosen people.

**(v.5)** – God has ascended with a shout! His shout of victory becomes our shout of victory.

### **1. His shout of victory**

So, did Joshua fight the battle of Jericho? **Joshua 6:16 (NKJV) — 16 ... Joshua said to the people: “Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!** All credit goes to God alone for the victory over Jericho. This is His shout. This is His battle. Joshua did not bring down the walls of Jericho, God did. So also we do not bring down the walls of sin, God does.

In fact, we are more likely hiding within the walls of the enemy than we are tearing them down. Man walls God out, because he knows, if God enters, then all our hatred, envy, and dissatisfaction will be exposed.

Inside the walls of our sinful flesh we stand in opposition. Here is where sin would like to be left alone to dwell and rule by itself. Here is where sin would like us to bow to its command. Whether it is as a church synod, as individual congregations, as spouses, or as parents and children, we much prefer to hide within the walls of me. We dwell within the security of my wants, rather than what is best for all the other people involved. I am right and that is all that matters. We like to be walled in where we can be more concerned with what others aren't doing rather than what I should be doing. Within these walls lies a wicked king who refuses to ever do something for someone else, until he gets something first.

**(v.5)** This word “Shout!” as we have it both in v.1 and v.5, describes a warlike cry for battle, or even a shout of triumph. This is the shout that rings out as our Lord Jesus does battle against these walls we've created. He refuses to let the wicked king of Jericho rule us any longer. But He doesn't come merely to destroy – He comes to save; He comes for Rahab. He doesn't shout this victory from His throne in heaven, He speaks from a voice on earth. You see, for God to go up with a shout, He had to first come down from His throne. In order for Him to ascend, He had to first descend.

**John 3:13 (NKJV) — 13 No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.**

The battle God came down to face was one He chose not to face from heaven. And thank God for that. For if God had faced His enemies from His throne in heaven, He would have destroyed us all. **(v.8)** God's holy throne... The throne of His holiness will let nothing come before it that is not equally set apart from all sin and uncleanness. We need someone holy and perfect who could bridge the gap between earth and heaven. We needed nothing short of God Himself descending from His throne to do right what we have done wrong.

As we read from Philippians, **Philippians 2:6–7 (NKJV) — 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.** He descends to take our form, to take our sins, and ascends, claiming your victory! As Martin Chemnitz wrote, “Christ having completed the work of redemption, having defeated death and the devil, ascended into heaven. Therefore Christ is truly God.” It is truly the Son of God whose death was sufficient to pay for all your worst sins,

who cried out “It is finished.” It is equally true that the Son of Man having rose from the dead, dined on fish and bread – proving that this Man Jesus was truly the victorious Son of God. And it is Jesus Christ, who is now exalted in victory, who has ascended to the throne of God – our one Mediator who lives and reigns over all things.

**Romans 8:34 (NKJV) — 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.**

It is Jesus who brings you, fully righteous, into the presence of God’s holy throne. As true God and true Man, Jesus continues to bridge the gap between earth and heaven.

(v.4) He comes to us in baptism, giving us something excellent. The excellence of Jacob does not have to do with worthiness. No, Jacob was not the most worthy. He lied and cheated His father and brother. He was not even the first born. What is excellent is that we are loved by God despite our sins, despite our disqualifications, purely by His enduring riches in Christ.

As we read in our epistle text, **Ephesians 1:18 (NKJV) — 18 that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.**

We now come across this bridge of God made flesh to ascend to the throne of God. The word is never a dead end. Jesus is the Word made flesh and here in the preaching of the good news, He is active. He shouts! ...and the walls of our flesh crumble; He exposes the sin that lies inside and rescues us. He subdues the peoples under us. All who would try to snatch away your inheritance are crushed under foot. The word is nothing short than the ascended Lord Jesus from His throne in heaven, ruling in our hearts, working and strengthening faith.

In Christ, God has indeed ascended with a shout!

## **2. Our shout of victory**

The victory at Jericho did not really happen at the moment of the wall fell down. Nor was it finally complete when the Israelites marched on toward the land of Ai. The victory was complete when the Lord came to Joshua on the plains before Jericho and said, **Joshua 6:2 (NKJV) — 2 And the Lord said to Joshua: “See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.** All that the Israelites did was to echo the shout of God. So also His shout becomes our shout. His ascension becomes our ascension. As He is exalted, we too are exalted. What God has shouted, now we too shout! (v.2)

But the world says, where is your king? What reason do you really have to shout victory? Why should we sing praises when day by day the innocent die at the hands of evil people? Why should we rejoice when we see governments approving of the killing

of unborn children? We see families divided, divorce, conflict between parents and children. We see members fade off the radar and disappear. We see, in the midst of false teaching, other churches grow bigger and grow more active in the community. We see divisions, errors, and growing lack of appreciation for the means of grace. Not just in others, but in ourselves we see a lack of triumph, a lack of appreciation for personal devotion and prayer. Does a our loving Savior really rule?

I recall having a conversation with some friends in college. Like a lot of people to one extent or another, one of these individuals believed in Karma. He believed that in general, if something bad happens to you, it is because you did something bad. If something good happens, it is because you deserve it.

What a frightful thing to think of God ruling this way! This would be God ascending with a shout of “you’re on your own, see ya.” If something good happened then I guess I deserve the praise. However looking at all the wickedness in our hearts and lives, if something bad has not happened to me yet, then I should be awfully worries about what lies ahead.

Kharma is to walk by blind sight. What I mean is that to determine God’s attitude toward you based on what you see, is to be blind. But Karma is not God’s method of reign over the nations. As the children of Israel circled the city day after day, what victory did they see? Day 1 ... day 2 ... day 3 ... All they saw were great walls and the expectation of mighty warriors waiting on the other side. They clung to God’s Word. Hebrews 11 says, **Hebrews 11:30 (NKJV) — 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.** So also, by faith the walls of our enemies are conquered. By faith we too encircle the city again and again...

The inhabitants of this world wonder what on earth we are doing. ... circling, walking not by sight, carrying this ark of God’s new covenant with us, following the faithful priests that go before us, blowing trumpets of truth, ... we keep on marching.

The victory, as we said, was as sure as God’s word before they even approached Jericho. Still the people were directed to circle the city. Sure, God could have just caused a great wind to knock down those walls of Jericho, sure He could have laid the whole city dead with fire from heaven, He didn’t. He let His people shout. He let His people witness to the victory that the LORD had promised, even though they didn’t yet see it.

God has gone up with a shout! And this shout is the shout of the gospel which proclaims the true victory. God has gone up and He has left us here to circle Jericho ... to shout this message for all those Rahabs within her walls. Shout the praises of Christ crucified.

As we read from our readings at the end of Luke and the beginning of Acts, Jesus did not come to restore an earthly kingdom. The power we have received is in the preaching of repentance and remission of sins. (**v.7**) This is our witness to the ends of

the earth: God has gone up with a shout. Christ has risen. Our Lord is the King of our faith.

As Luther put it, The 47th psalm is a prophecy of Christ, that He shall rise up and become king over all the world, without a battle, simply through shouts, songs, and trumpet calls, that is, through the joyful preaching of the Gospel, just as the walls of Jericho fell by trumpet blasts and shouts, with out any weapons at all.”

Where is our king? He is in heaven. His kingdom is not of this world. The battle we wage is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers in the heavenly places. **Ephesians 1:22 (NKJV) — 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church.** Christ rules all things for the sake of His Church, for the sake of your eternal destiny. He is directing all things to bring you to your eternal inheritance, the promised land.

Just like God’s rule, our true enemies are not seen with the eyes. Those who are subdued under foot are the spiritual forces of this world. It is again by faith that we reign as kings and priests. The world is trampled under as you count the sacrifice of Christ worth far more than your job, your car, your TV, and even your own desires. Satan is choked at the throat as you shout in his face, “We are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a parat of His holy nation.” You suffocate and execute your sinful flesh as you cling to His word, the hidden God who is King of all the earth, who has reconciled you to Himself, who will not leave you nor forsake you.

The Israelites were to be united. They were to march as one. They were to shout with one voice. If they were not united behind the shout of God, would they expect to take the city? If there were divisions in the ranks and a confused shout came forth, what would the king of Jericho think? We in the CLC gather under one Ascended Lord. We strive to be united in who He is and what He says. We pray that the Lord would keep our ranks grounded in His word and united in our confessional shouts.

Let us then sing praises! Whether we are gathered around the word [as a synod or] as a local congregation or as a family in our homes, let us shout to God with the voice of triumph! He is awesome and does reign supreme. The world would never know this reign of God by grace, if God’s people would be silent. Our ascension shout is to tell them about the real Way, the absolute Truth, and the everlasting Life. Let us bring down the walls with shouts of God’s Word and go rescue the Rahabs, the harlots, the lost, the sinners who are trapped inside.

**Joshua 6:16 (NKJV) — 16 And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: “Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!**

God has ascended with a shout! Amen.