

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
Ascension, May 9, 2013 Psalm 47



For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.
¹ Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. ² For the LORD Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth. ³ He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet. ⁴ He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved. ⁵ God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets. 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 to him a psalm of praise. ⁸ God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. ⁹ The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted.

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

I was watching a video on the Internet the other day. There was loud shouting. Mrs. Schultz said, “What is that?” I said, “Come and see!” It was a video of a shepherd climbing this very steep mountain – with tall grass and huge boulders. At the very top of this mountain in New Zealand was a sheep. As the shepherd got closer – you could see – the sheep would try and run – but it couldn’t. Its’ head was stuck between the squares of this wire fence. The sheep pushed and pushed – only getting more stuck – more trapped! The shepherd grabbed hold of the sheep and pulled – still stuck. He pulled some more – running his hand around the sheep’s neck – to get it loose from the fence – wool came off. Suddenly the sheep was free! But it fell – rolling down the hill. It was only then that you realized how high this mountain was. The sheep rolled past a second – then a third – then a fourth shepherd. Each was unable to reach out and catch the sheep. It fell – it rolled all the way to the bottom of the mountain.... And then it got up. It was ok. The sheep stood up – and the shepherd yelled! He cried out for joy – that the little sheep was ok. He shouted and shouted some more. The little sheep was free! You don’t hear that so often. The simple pure joy that the sheep is safe. But that’s what God’s Word talks about today!

Sing Praises To Our Ascended King!

- 1. This King rules everything**
- 2. This King will return soon.**

This part of God’s Word we are concentrating on tonight is part of the Old Testament Hymnal—Psalm 47. The notes just before the Psalm are part of God’s Word, too. **For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm. The sons—the descendants of Korah—**that is descendants of Levi—the musicians who played their instruments in the tabernacle—then the temple of the LORD! When you hear the name Korah—does anything come to mind? Do you think of Korah’s rebellion—Korah reminds you of Dathan and Abiram, too? Do you think of Numbers chapter 16? **Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites – Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth – became *insolent* ² and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders**

who had been appointed members of the council. ³ They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the LORD's assembly?" Of course it wasn't Moses and Aaron who had in mind to lead and rule over the children of Israel—quite the opposite! ¹⁶ Moses said to Korah, "You and all your followers are to appear before the LORD tomorrow – you and they and Aaron. ¹⁷ Each man is to take his censer and put incense in it – 250 censers in all – and present it before the LORD. You and Aaron are to present your censers also." ¹⁸ So each of them took his censer, put burning coals and incense in it, and stood with Moses and Aaron at the entrance to the tent of meeting. ¹⁹ When Korah had gathered all his followers in opposition to them at the entrance to the tent of meeting, the glory of the LORD appeared to the entire assembly. ²⁰ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ²¹ "Separate yourselves from this assembly so I can put an end to them at once." It was up to the LORD – the Great I AM – to judge the people who were rebelling against the LORD's representatives. It was up to the LORD – and He did! ³¹ As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground under them split apart ³² and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households, and all those associated with Korah, together with their possessions. ³³ They went down alive into the realm of the dead, with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they perished and were gone from the community. ³⁴ At their cries, all the Israelites around them fled, shouting, "The earth is going to swallow us too!" ³⁵ And fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense. It is only by the grace of God that we are not consumed! It is only by the grace of God – for Jesus' sake that the earth does not open up and swallow us. By the grace of God – that fire does not rain down on us – from Heaven! God is merciful to us – every beat of our ♥s! Whenever you read one of the Psalms – Psalm 44 through Psalm 49 – when you read A psalm of the sons of Korah – be reminded of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Be reminded of the blistering judgment of God against insolent attitudes and rebellion against the LORD and those the LORD has chosen to lead his people!

¹ Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. ² For the LORD Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth. All you nations! If you look it up – there are how many nations? With the addition of South Sudan on July 2011 there are 193 nations in the UN. There are 77 developing nations – that is countries where the economy is very wobbly. They often meet to try and think of ways to help their countries to grow and prosper economically – to make something to sell – in order to afford to buy the things they need. They say one of the main purposes of the UN is for world peace. World peace! Wouldn't that be wonderful – if people were not shooting or blowing up one another. There are at the present time some 11 conflicts in our world where more than 1,000 people are dying violently every year. In Burma fighting has been going on since 4 years before I was born. Some 12,000+ civilians died last year. Over 210,000 people have died since the fighting began. Can you find Burma on a map? There is fighting in Somalia – in Africa. Some 2,600 people died last year. The fighting there – began the year our family moved to Watertown. Since then more than ½ million people have died. Again – could you find Somalia on a map? Do you know how many people have died in Afghanistan and Pakistan since 2001? Almost 330,000 people! Could you find Afghanistan on a map? **Clap your hands, all you nations!** When will Burma and Somalia and Afghanistan and Pakistan clap their hands? Will they celebrate Jesus' forgiving love? Do they even know who Jesus is? I was visiting a shut-in the other day – a very tall grandpa who said – there sure are a lot of people in this world – and so? I said about 7 billion people alive right now. And he said, "And Jesus knows every one of them." I said, "He even knows how many

hairs on their heads!" And he said, "Do you ever wonder out of all those people – why Jesus was so good to me and to you?" I said, "I think about that all the time! Why am I so blessed – that Jesus saw to it – that I was baptized – when I was an infant – that I was taught God's Word? That I was confirmed – and brought to Church – Sunday after Sunday and Wednesdays during Advent and Lent and Thursday – 40 days after Easter!

¹ Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. ² For the LORD Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth. "Awesome!" It is a little bit of a Schultz family joke that I don't like the word "awesome"! It's because I find the word incredibly overused. Everything is awesome! A slice of really good pizza is awesome! The new Iron Man 3 movie is awesome. My two/one wingtips are awesome! Everything is awesome – and so? The LORD Most High is incredible. He is not like any other god. All the other gods – small "g" are gods that demand people save themselves. I don't know that a day or two doesn't go by and you hear people use the word Karma. That's a very technical word for what goes around comes around. That you better do the right thing now – or else something very terrible is going to happen to you down the road – which will make you wish you had! That's just wrong! The LORD – the one true God – saves us by grace through faith. That's just part of what makes him so awesome – truly worthy of our awe and respect – that he would sacrifice His one and only Son – to save us from all out guilt and shame!

⁵ God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets. ⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. Four times in these few words – repeats the phrase – sing praises! That's what we do in Church. We sing praises. Here is reason to come to Church – what you can think of no other reason – to sing praises! I got up the other day – at 5:30 – to drive to Our Redeemer in Madison for Chapel. They have 99 children in their day school. They said they would sing any songs I wanted – so I said I would like to sing the *First Song of Isaiah!* It's a little bit complicated. There is not a syllable for every note – so it got a little mushed. But I told them – it was more than worth getting up at 5:30 in the morning to hear them sing, "Surely it is God who saves me. I will trust in him and not be afraid!" It was glorious! Even as it is glorious here today – to hear the smallest little people with the hearts so overflowing with faith – come here to sing praises. As Judgment Day comes closer and closer – it is more and more important to come to Church – to worship. It is more and more important that we read our Meditations and the WELS Devotion you can get e-mailed – and the live stream devotions from Luther Prep. It is more and more important that we remain close to God's Word in this world that is in spiritual and moral decay. We need to be the salt and the light that fights against that darkness and decay.

⁷ For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. ⁸ God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. As time goes by it sometimes seems like it's getting more and more scary listening to the news. **Jesus said--in this world you will have troubles – but don't be scared – don't be afraid – Jesus has overcome the world! Jesus is the king of all the earth. Jesus reigns over all the nations. Jesus ascended to sit on his holy throne!** I love to read about people who live a very long life. I read about a little grandma named Pearl. I saw her picture standing next to the Oscar Meyer Wienermobile – and so – like Meinhardt Raabe – the munchkin coroner drove. Pearl is 105 years old. She chalks up her long life to hard work and eating bacon – bacon every day – two strips of crispy bacon every morning and two strips of crispy bacon for lunch, too! Oscar Meyer was so happy to hear she loves bacon they have given her a lifetime supply! How sweet is that? Our life is in Jesus' nail marked hands. How many days will he give us in this world? Only Jesus knows. The best part is – right now Jesus is preparing a place for us in Heaven. Only when it is completely ready will

Jesus come and get us—to take us to our forever home. The fact is—we have the gift of eternal life because Jesus died and rose again to save us. Jesus lived for us—died for us and rose again. Today we sing praises to our crucified, risen and ascended Lord—Christ the King. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Pastor Anthony E. Schultz