

Revelation 5: 13 and 14: “The Praise of Every Creature”, Sermon # 42
in the series – “The Faithful and True Witness”, Delivered by
Pastor Paul Rendall on April 10th, 2016,
in the Afternoon Worship Service.

In Chapter 4, verse 11, we learned that God the Father is worthy to be praised and to be given honor and glory because He created all things. Now here in verse 13 we find that every creature which is heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, are heard to be saying, “Blessing, and honor, and glory and power be unto Him who sits on the throne and unto the Lamb, forever and ever.” This afternoon, I would like us to consider this truth; that all of God’s creatures are created to praise the Triune God, and they live to fulfill the purpose for which they were created. Indeed, we find that this truth is proclaimed in many parts of the Scripture, as we shall see as I preach more of this sermon to you. The major question that we want to ask this afternoon is this: In what specific ways do all the creatures that God has made, praise Him; the angels, those persons redeemed by Christ, and all of creation? 1st of all, let us ask: How it is that those creatures which are in heaven praise God? Then, 2nd, we will ask: How it is that the creatures who are on the earth are to praise God? And 3rd, let us ask: How is it that the creatures under the earth are to praise God? And 4th, let us ask: How are the creatures who are in the sea to praise God? May God help us to answer these questions correctly.

1st of all – How is it that every creature which is in heaven brings praise to God?

It appears to me from what is said, in praise of our Lord Jesus Christ in verse 12, that every kind of praise is summed up in these words that are used to set forth His worth. The words, “Power, and riches and wisdom and strength, and honor and glory and blessing” seem to encompass it all. There are seven aspects of praise which are given to the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, and all seven are rendered to Him by the angels and by the living creatures and the elders. Every creature which is in heaven would encompass all of the angels, and the spirits of righteous men made perfect, from the beginning of the world until this present hour. There are spirits of men which have been in the presence of Almighty God since the death of righteous Abel. And I do not think that they are dormant spirits. I think that these righteous departed spirits are capable of praising God, and they do praise God. You, as a creature whom God has created, are capable of praising Him in the spirit. You are capable of praying to God in your spirit. You are capable of singing to God in your spirit. In 1 Corinthians 14: 15 the Apostle Paul says, “I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding.” “I will sing with the spirit, and will also sing with the understanding.” He is referring to what is going on in his heart and mind as being the basis of all his praise.

But just because a person’s physical brain is dead and their physical body is laid in the earth, does not mean that the spirit which has left the body no longer has thoughts which cannot be read by God, or praises that cannot be expressed to God. There is no such thing as soul sleep. I believe that the spirits of righteous men and women who have died, since they no longer have sin in their spirit, and since there is no fleshly nature to clog their praises, they are actually much more alive in their spirit unto God, and to praise, than any of us here upon the earth. Now, I grant, that it will be more glorious in the day of the resurrection, when the resurrection body is rejoined to the spirit which has been made perfect, but I believe as Paul has said in 2nd Corinthians 5: 8, “We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” “Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.” If that is our aim when absent, that means that we must be able to do things for our Lord even in the interim time period when we will have no body to do it with, until the time of the resurrection. I believe that one of the major occupations of the departed righteous is

praise. They praise God along with the myriads of angels, and they get to know them and love them, and perhaps even to converse with the other saints.

If you take a close look at Luke chapter 16, you will better understand what it is like for those who have died. The poor man Lazarus is pictured there, as being in “Abraham’s bosom”. He was carried to this place of comfort and bliss by the angels. On the other hand, the rich man, who had died, was taken to a place of torments. Across the great gulf which had been fixed between these two real places, the rich man cried out to Father Abraham and carried on a conversation with him about having Lazarus come over to him. He wanted Lazarus to dip his finger in water, and be sent over to him, to place the water on his tongue to cool it. It is pretty evident that this parable has everything to do with the reality of what it is like for those who have died. Jesus spoke this parable so that people could know and be forewarned of the danger of going to the place of torments. But He spoke this parable so that if, as a believer, a person were enduring various trials and sufferings, they would be able to look forward to the everlasting joy and comfort which exist in heaven for those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus. I am sure that these realities are far more real and profound and true than even the words of the parable can convey. I think of the words of D.L. Moody when referring to his own death. He said, “Someday you are going to read in a newspaper that D.L. Moody of East Northfield is dead.” “Don’t you believe a word of it!” “At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now; I shall have gone up higher, that is all; out of this old clay tenement, to a house that is immortal.” Well D.L. Moody did die, and he did go up, and he no doubt is more alive than he was at the time that he spoke those words. But his body being given back to him awaits the Day of the resurrection. It is his soul and spirit that are more alive now. He is one of those creatures who is in heaven singing and praising God with the angels.

2nd – How is it that the creatures on the earth praise God?

The answer is that they do this according to how God has created them, or how he has re-created them, or they do not do it rightly at all. Turn with me over to Job chapter 40. Listen to God speak of how a great creature that He has made glorifies and praises Him. Verse 15 says, “Look now at the behemoth, which I made along with you; He eats grass like an ox.” “See now, his strength is in his hips, and his power is in his stomach muscles.” “He moves his tail like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are tightly knit.” “His bones are like beams of bronze, His ribs like bars of iron.” “He is one of the first of the ways of God.” I would suggest to you that this creature is praising God for what he able to do with his strength. He gives God pleasure and praise by the use of his power and strength. You and I who are here upon the earth, should, when we praise God, be seeing Him as worthy of our strength as well. The behemoth does this naturally and instinctually, but you and I do it according to the power that He has given us by His grace. But when we praise Him, and when we serve Him, and when we worship Him, are we giving Him what He is worthy of? He is worthy of whatever power and strength that He has given us, both physically and spiritually, being directed back to Him with all of our heart and all of our strength in worship and praise in all that we do.

We should be giving to God the very best of ourselves; not the leftovers of power and strength from what is left after the work week. Stir yourself up to praise and bless His holy Name. Call upon Him and ask Him to receive the gift of the good thoughts and meditations of your heart, and pray that these thoughts would be acceptable in His sight. This kind of righteous thinking requires a regenerate heart. You cannot do this simply by imitating the words and prayers of people around you, or by reading aloud from the book of Common Prayer. Your praise should be the living, breathing devotion that has come from having your heart fired with love to God for having given you the gift of His Son Jesus. This will keep you awake in the services of the church when all of your best efforts fall short. You should stoke the fires of your heart by secret prayer and the reading of the Scriptures and developing a heart relationship with

Christ. Then you will arise to praise Him. Then God will truly receive something of worth from your life.

It is because you have asked the Spirit for greater measures of blessing and power, strength and wisdom, that it will be translated into blessing and glory and honor for what He does tangibly give; and what you continue to look for, from Him. This is spiritual excitement and revival. It is not wild fire or enthusiasm. This is what God has called us to in our salvation. Listen to Psalm 146. "Praise the Lord!" "Praise the Lord, O my soul!" "While I live I will praise the Lord; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being." Listen to Psalm 115, verse 15 and following. "May you be blessed by the Lord, who made heaven and earth." "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth He has given to the children of men." "The dead do not praise the Lord, nor any who go down into silence." "But we will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore." "Praise the Lord!" This is how important it is for us to praise the Lord. It is so true, that we will be judged according to our works for the things done in the body. And therefore, one of the best ways that we can glorify God in our bodies is by praising him with our mouths, obeying Him with our eyes, and hands, and feet, and other members of our bodies. Let us do this while we have our being, knowing that when we are called up higher, that with our body we will no longer be able to do, what we will long to do until the day of the resurrection; to praise him. Our body will be silent in the grave. The dead do not praise the Lord, nor any who down into silence. Oh, the awful silence of hell, that for those who are there, that they will no longer hear the praise of God in it forevermore. But O, the wonderful praise of heaven, that even after losing the body, we shall still bless the Lord for all the time until we get our body back again on the Day of the resurrection. God is the God of the living and not of the dead, as Jesus says in Mark 12: 27. That is why we why we shall praise our God and our Christ forevermore.

And 3rd – Let us ask how it is that creatures under the earth praise God?

There are some creatures which have been created to live under the earth. In Proverbs chapter 30 we are told of the ants. They are "little on the earth", and we might add, "under the earth", but the Scripture says that "they are exceedingly wise." The ants, it says further, "are not a strong people, yet they prepare their food in the summer." This is how God is honored by those of us who are not a strong people in themselves. The Christian will prepare for the winter times of their soul, by storing up the food of the word of God to live on, when other outward supplies of strength and power fail them. They will "remember their Creator in the days of their youth," they will praise Him and pray to Him and live for Him in the summer of their lives, so that when their strength diminishes, when they grow older, they will know that they did what they could while they had their strength. "Grace grows best in winter", it is true, but the true Christian will lay up for themselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust cannot destroy them. They will do this in the good times so that they will have a provision of spiritual food to feed on; food that the world knows nothing about. They will learn to prize the treasures of spiritual things, when they are young and strong, and not simply begin, when they are old and feeble. They will roll these treasures into the underground of their hearts, just like you might see an ant roll a large crumb of food into a hole in the ground.

Proverbs 30: 26 says, "The rock badgers are a feeble folk, yet they make their homes in the crags." I love what John Gill says on this. "The conies make their homes in the rocks, to cure themselves from their more potent enemies; and thus what they lack in strength is made up in sagacity, and by their wise conduct they provide for their safety and protection." "These are an emblem of the people of God, who are a weak and feeble people, unable of themselves to perform spiritual duties, to exercise grace, to withstand the corruptions of their nature, resist the temptations of Satan, bear up under afflictive providences, and grapple with spiritual enemies, or defend themselves from them: but such heavenly wisdom is given them, as to betake themselves for refuge and shelter to Christ, the Rock of Israel; the Rock of salvation, the Rock that is higher than they; a strong one, on which the Church is built, and against which the gates

of hell cannot prevail: and here they are safe from the storms of divine wrath, and the avenging justice of God; from the rage and fury of men, and the fiery darts of Satan; here they dwell safely and delightfully, and have all manner of provision at hand for them; they are inhabitants of that Rock, who have reason to sing indeed!" Think of the Christians of the 1st and 2nd centuries who often lived in the catacombs and yet flourished so well underground. Isaiah 33: 15 and 16 says that the person who walks uprightly and speaks uprightly, who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with their hands refusing bribes, who stops their ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts their eyes from seeing evil; that person shall dwell on high; his place of defense will be the fortress of the rocks; bread will be given to him, and his water will be sure. It does pay for the Christian to learn to praise the Lord in this "underground sense".

And finally- Let us ask ourselves how all the creatures in the sea praise God?

Such creatures as are in sea praise the Lord too. Psalm 104: 24 says, "O Lord, how manifold are Your works!" "In wisdom You have made them all." "The earth is full of your possessions – This great and wide sea, in which are innumerable teeming things, living things both small and great." "There the ships sail about; there is that Leviathan which You have made to play there." "These all wait for You, that You may give them their food in due season." "What You give them they gather in; You open Your hand, they are filled with good." In verse 31 the praise continues, "May the glory of the Lord endure forever." "May the Lord rejoice in His works." Is the Lord rejoicing in you, one of His works, this afternoon. Do you praise Him in this way? Isaiah 42: 10 says, "Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you coastlands and you inhabitants of them!" Verse 12 says further, "Let them give glory to the Lord, and declare His praise in the coastlands." "The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war." "He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies."

This is what our Lord Jesus Christ did for all of creation in the redemption of God's Elect. This is what He will yet do in the resurrection of the dead and the redemption of the creation when the New Heavens and the New Earth are created for His praise. Romans 8: 19 says, "For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God." "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." "For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now." But it shall be released. That is why in Psalm 148 it says, "Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the heights!" "Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him all His hosts!" "Praise Him sun and moon; praise Him, all you stars of light!" "Praise Him you heavens of heavens, and you waters above the heavens!" "Praise the Lord from the earth, You great sea creatures and all the depths; fire and hail, snow and clouds; stormy wind fulfilling His word; mountains and all hills; fruitful trees and all cedars; beasts and all cattle; creeping things and flying fowl; kings of the earth and all peoples; princes and all judges of the earth; both young men and maidens; old men and children." "Let them praise the name of the Lord, for His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven." "And He has exalted the horn of His people, the praise of all His saints." Will you not covenant with me today to become more of a creature of praise; to be praising Him and blessing Him at all times, and His praise be continually in your mouth?