

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen

Whistle while you work.

- I'm sure most all of you have heard that phrase before.
- It actually comes from Walt Disney's 1937 animated film classic, "Snow White and the 7 Dwarfs."

Another phrase in that move.....also talking about singing and work is.....

- "Hi, ho, hi ho, and off to work I go."
- As I said those words, you probably sang them in your head.

In 1937 Walt Disney put into cartoon what had long been part of various cultures around the world.....the work song.

- The idea of singing and work actually going together.
- And they do.
- They make work easier.
- They help us to coordinate and to focus.
- They help to make work more enjoyable.

In earlier times railroad workers found this out and lived by this.

- Railroad workers would spend their days laying the rails.
- To do this, they would take 10 pound hammers, swing them in a full circle, and strike the spike that would hold down the rail and ties.

A work song would coordinate the labor.

- The rhythm of the song set the pace for the swinging.
- The joining of voices united the workers and the call and the response kept the workers engaged.

Music and our singing of the liturgy and hymns can do the same thing for us.

- Music was very important to Martin Luther.
- He said it engaged the mind and spirit.

In fact, his writing of the small catechism is such that it can be placed to rhythm and song to be more easily memorized and remembered. Let me give you an example using the First Article of the Apostles' Creed

- I believe that God has made me and all creatures.
- That He has given me by BODY AND SOUL; EYES, EARS AND ALL MY MEMBERS....
- MY REASON, AND ALL MY SENSES and still takes care of them.
- He also gives me CLOTHING AND SHOES, FOOD AND DRINK, HOUSE AND HOME, WIFE AND CHILDREN, LAND, ANIMALS, and all that I have.

Music is important to us.

- Do you use it to help you with your work?
- Do you use it to stay engaged and focused?
- To help improve your outlook and disposition?

Our message for today is based on our assigned Psalm.

- Psalm 113.
- And it is a praise psalm.

Hear again just the first 2 verses of this psalm.

- Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord.
- Blessed is the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore.
- From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised.

Psalm 113 is one of the 6 Psalms that was sung each year at the time of each of the major festivals.

- Especially the Passover festival.
- It would be the first of 3 Psalms sang at the beginning of the celebration.
- The other 3 would be sung after the meal.

This Psalm, then, was sung by Jesus and His disciples before the meal at our Lord's Last Supper.

- His institution of the Holy Meal for you and me.
- It is good that we look at this Psalm today.
- It is good that we chanted a portion of this Psalm together a little earlier
- It is good that we sing together in our liturgy and hymns as we stand together as workers in God's kingdom.

Psalm 113 calls us to praise the name of the Lord.

- And we do that in work and song.
- And we do that in the words and direction given to us in Psalm 113.

And what are those words and direction?

- In work and song, with the help of Psalm 113, I would like today to direct our attention to 3 things.
- First, God rules over all things.....both big and small.

One of the intriguing things about work songs is that they join two dissimilar things.

- For work songs, they join the pleasure of singing with the less pleasurable, more difficult task of work.
- For example, singing with the laying of railroad track.

As we think about God's rule over all things, what 2 dissimilar things does our Psalm bring together?

- God's rule over both big and small.
- We sometimes can think of God's vastness as being so great, that He can't worry about me.
- Or conversely, God's attention to me leaving Him unable to have control over the whole universe.
- This psalm brings these ideas about God together.

On the one hand we have an almighty God that transcends, is above, the entire universe.

- Hear these next words of the Psalm.
- Verses 4 through 6.
- The Lord is high above all nations and His glory above the heavens.
- Who is the Lord our God who is seated on high, who looks far down on the heavens and the earth.

Our God is enthroned in eternity.

- Time passes in our world.
- Kings and rulers come and go.
- But the Lord is seated in the heavenly realms, and His rule never began and never ends.
- It just always is.

But, with all the magnificence of our God, sometimes we keep separate and have trouble drawing together with this, the intimacy of God.

- God is over the entire universe; but at the same time we have the utter nearness of God.
- The God who is seated above the heavens and earth is also able to see the smallest things on earth.

And, our song of Psalm 113 also brings that together for us.

- Hear the words of verses 7 and 8 of our Psalm.
- He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap.....
- To make them sit with princes, with the princes of His people.

God's kingdom is not a flyover kingdom.

- You know, before the airlines went to fewer central hubs around the United States, St. Louis airport used to be a major destination point for airlines.
- Lambert airport was very busy.
- In the early years of my previous job, I often would fly into and out of St. Louis.

But then that all changed when the airline industry went to less hubs.

- Missouri became a flyover state.
- People traveling from New York to Los Angeles fly over Missouri.

It can be that way with people also.

- Some may want/chose to flyover the less fortunate.
- The ones they think inconsequential.

Our God has no flyover states, no flyover people.

- Every person is important.
- God is able to care for the poor and needy.
- Those who gather their food from trash heaps are the ones the almighty God notices.
- The people whose lives pass by and leave no mark in the world are the ones that God marks and claims as His own.

Secondly, the Psalm draws together for us Jesus as truly God and Jesus as truly man.

- We have a God who chose to come to earth to be one of us.
- We have a God in Jesus Christ who sings with us and over us.
- Out of His gracious love, the Lord of all things chose to come into this world and to die on the cross.....
- To bear the suffering of all sin for you and brings the joy of salvation to you.
- And that gives us every reason to sing.

- Jesus joins in our burdens and brings to us the joys of salvation.

You are chosen by God.

- There is no person so small, no sin so hidden that Jesus does not take it upon Himself and bring to you the grace of God.

So, we celebrate and sing praises to God who rules over and cares for us.

- We celebrate and sing praises with Jesus who has come and brought salvation to us.
- And lastly, we celebrate and sing praises as we are workers in God's kingdom.

We have spent some time the last few weeks in encouragement.

- Encouragement to be involved in our church. Your church.

It is not a burden.

- It is not a have to.
- It is a get to.
- It is in response to our God and it is a joy.

And as workers in God's kingdom, we can sing together as we work.

- The church is no exception to the idea of song and work together.
- It gives us rhythm.
- It gives us focus on what we are about.
- It strengthens us in the bonds of unity.
- It makes our work more joyful and fun.

Luther understood this well.

- He taught that we should.....
- Pray in the morning.....
- And then go joyfully to work singing a hymn.

Dear fellow saints of Christ.....

- It is good that we sing and give praise to God.
- It is good that we sing on our own.....
- But even as we do that; realize and draw strength in knowing that fellow members are also singing as they go about their day.

- And then come to God's House where we sing together and serve one another together in song.
- Work and song do go together.

We have one verse remaining in our Psalm.

- Verse 9.
- It reads. "He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children.
- Praise the Lord.

Perhaps you are thinking, I am too insignificant.

- This isn't meant for me.
- It is.
- All the vastness of everything we have talked about is also brought to the specificity and personalization of you.
- This Psalm does that also.

One of the interesting things about this Psalm is the way in which one small incident from the Scriptures is incorporated into the yearly song for the Passover celebration.

- If you were to list some of the more memorable events of Scripture, what would you include?
- You would definitely include the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- If you give it some thought, however, you might include accounts like creation, Noah and the ark, Moses and the Red Sea, and David and Goliath.

You probably would not include Hannah and the gift of her son Samuel.

- As you think about the major events of Scripture, even though Samuel was a prophet, the story of Hannah might not make the list.
- It might not make the song.
- Hannah was 1 of Elkanah's (El con ah's) 2 wives. She was the barren one. Not having children caused her great distress.
- When she once was in the temple praying to God about this, the priest saw how upset she was and accused her of being drunk.
- But Hannah was pouring her heart out before the Lord.

And though her husband did not hear her, though the priest did not understand her, the Lord heard and understood and answered her prayer.

- Upon having her child, Hannah sang a song of praise to God.

And a portion of that song of praise is quoted in this Psalm, including the last verse being reference to the barren woman.

- From the song of 1 of the minor characters in Scripture comes a confession of faith in God.
- God caused this song to be heard in Israel, and Israel began to join in singing this song.
- This one small work of God became something that joined God's people together as they saw how He works in the smallest ways to extend His gracious care to His people.
- And it was done through song.

Dear fellow members of Hope, this song that we sing includes you. It is about you.

- We as God's people are united in song as we.....
- Together believe in Christ.
- As we together live in Christ.
- And as we together serve as workers in His kingdom.
- We live and serve and work and sing together in God's kingdom.

Dear fellow redeemed.....

- We have every reason to rejoice.
- We have every reason to be in song as we have the joy and privilege of the work we are given to do.
- Let's go forward together in song to accept the tasks/the work God has given us to do.

This is a day that the Lord has made. Let us go forth and be glad in it.

- For God cares for us. And He has the power and might to do it.
- For Jesus is singing with us and over us. He has brought us salvation.
- And we have the joy and privilege of being workers in His kingdom.
- Go forth in work and song.
- From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised.
- Amen.

(Please stand) And now, may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Having heard the Word of God we now prepare our hearts and minds to confess together the words of the Nicene Creed as found on page 158 in your hymnal.