

Devotion for Easter 4

Psalm 150

Hallelujah! Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty heavens!

Praise Him for His mighty deeds; praise Him according to His excellent greatness!

Praise Him with trumpet sound; praise Him with lute and harp!

Praise Him with tambourine and dance; praise Him with strings and pipe!

Praise Him with sounding cymbals; praise Him with loud clashing cymbals!

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Hallelujah!

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen*

Acts 8:1-40

The gospel continues to be proclaimed in the midst of persecution

What good thing did God do through the persecution and scattering of the church in Jerusalem?

What was significant about the giving of the Spirit to the Samaritan believers?

What is important about the baptism of the Ethiopian official?

John 15:1-27

Vine, branches and bearing fruit

What word of Jesus cleanses us?

How does Jesus (the vine) nourish and sustain us (the branches)?

What is the fruit Jesus wants us to bear for Him?

“Bearing Fruit”

How can you tell an apple tree from an orange tree? There are many ways of distinguishing one tree from another. The size of the tree and the type of leaves, to name but two. The most certain way of telling one tree from another is by the type of fruit the tree produces. Apple trees produce apples, orange trees produce oranges, vines produce grapes. You can always distinguish one tree or plant from another, by the type of fruit they produce. Likewise, the health of the plant can be determined by the quality and quantity of the fruit it produces. A sickly tree is not likely to produce an abundance of healthy fruit. A tree that produces no fruit is probably on the brink of death, if it has not already crossed that threshold. A healthy living tree produces good fruit in abundance. Fruit is a sign not only of the type of tree, but that it is a healthy living plant.

The fruit of faith in Christ are the works by which we give thanks to God for His love in giving Jesus to be our Saviour. In Psalm 86 the psalmist sang, “*I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever. For great is your steadfast love toward me; for you have delivered my soul from the depths of hell.*” We thank God for the salvation from sin, the devil and eternal death He has given us in Christ Jesus.

We bear good fruit by sharing God’s love with others in acts of kindness. St. James described the fruit of faith saying, “*Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.*” We bear good fruit by telling other people about God’s love in Christ Jesus, so that they too would know God as their Father through faith in Jesus as their Saviour. The fruit of faith gives glory to God and testifies to His love in Christ Jesus and the salvation He offers to everyone through faith In His name.

“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” (CCLI: #453681)

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love; Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee, Hail Thee as the sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the dark of doubt away; Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day!

All Thy works with joy surround Thee, Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays, Stars and angels sing around Thee, Centre of unbroken praise; Field and forest, vale and mountain, Flowery meadow, flashing sea, Chanting bird and flowing fountain, call us to rejoice in Thee.

Thou art giving and forgiving, Ever blessing, ever blest, Well spring of the joy of living, Ocean depth of happy rest! Thou our Father, Christ our Brother, All who live in love are Thine: Teach us how to love each other, Lift us to the joy Divine.

Mortals, join the mighty chorus, Which the morning stars began; Father love is reigning o'er us, Brother love binds man to man. Ever singing, march we onward, Victors in the midst of strife; Joyful music lifts us sun-ward, in the triumph song of life.

Prayer

Dearest Jesus, you are the vine and we are the branches. You called us to life through your word and joined us to yourself through our baptism into your death and resurrection. You are the vine and we are the branches. You join us to yourself and to each other as members of your body through the Holy Spirit, who dwells within and among us. You are the vine and we are the branches. You nourish our hungry spirits with your righteousness through the word and by the blessing of your holy body and precious blood in communion. You are the vine and we are the branches. Bless us that we may always abide in you and that through you we may produce the good fruit of faithfulness to your commands; to love one another and to share your love with others. In your name. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Forever and ever. Amen

The Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Benediction

Psalm 90:17

“Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!”

Bible Knowledge Quiz

Which prophet prayed and the heavens withheld rain 3 and half years?

Which prophet requested a musician before prophesying?

Which king was comforted in spiritual distress by music?

Answers to last week's Quiz

About seven miles. (Luke 24:13)

A Sabbath day's journey, about ½ mile. (Acts 1:12)

As far as the east is from the west. (Psalm 103:12)