

Notes for Brian's Sermon at Brentwood Presbyterian Church

Sun, May 19, 2019 – Joy/Celebration

What Music Inspires Your Soul?

(Psalm 150 with Refrain #1)



**Praise God for the Lord's mighty deeds;
praise God according to his surpassing greatness!
(Psalm 150:2)**

A lesson from Psalm 150

Ya gotta think the writer and the community has a wide taste in music in mind in our psalm this morning – consider that list instruments again – trumpets, lutes, harps, tambourines, strings, pipes, and cymbals – instruments capable of all sorts of music – soft and loud, fast and slow, melodic and dissonant, big bands and small ensembles – music to suit the broad range of moods and attitudes that we have found in our year-long exploration of the Book of Psalms – just a reminder of that wonderful list of themes that Dan chose as we returned from the Vital Worship Grant consultation last June at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, MI:

Love/Adoration
Call/Rebellion
Longing/Loneliness
Forgiveness/Earnest Sorrow
Illumination/Listening
Hope/Uncertainty
Justice/Dedication
Lament/Grieving
Peace/Thanksgiving
Joy/Celebration

What a rich tapestry of divine initiative and human response, good and bad, obedient and rebellious – but it all ends with this psalm, this shout of praise, this big band burst of joy and celebration – in the end, as we say in our *Brentwood Declaration*, God's love will transform the heavens and the earth, and bring justice, peace, and joy to every dimension of creation – and all the peoples will praise the Lord with their whole beings

for what God has done – for the restoration of God’s original intent for creation – that is the activity of God aligned with which we will find our salvation – our healing and reconciliation – our authentic dignity as ambassadors of the message of the good news that God is love

Provocative points to ponder – as always, too many to cram into one sermon

- As part of the Jesus, Jazz, and Worship Project that we have been implementing this year, we’ve been asking people, in as open a way as we can imagine, how they see the Spirit at work in their music – how they understand the source of their inspiration? – we’ll spend a couple of days this coming weekend exploring that further and digging more deeply into the dynamics that are at work in our ‘musicking’ here at Brentwood, especially as it relates to our connections with the jazz community – if you are interested in more details, please take a flyer - also plan to come for all or part of the consultation – here’d the core conviction that has been deepened for me through these conversations = the Spirit is at work in the jazz community, reconciling people to companionship with God in Jesus Christ – they don’t always, or even often, use Christian language to describe that inspiration, but it is there – and by connecting with it, by being compassionate with those experiencing it, by being curious about how we might understand that inspiration more richly, and by being companions on their journey of discovery, we gain a hearing to invite them to enter more fully into the Commonwealth of God that is unfolding, whether we see it or not – that’s the inspiration that moved the psalmist’s community to the kind of joy we find in Ps 150 – I pray that it continues to inspire us

How does this all relate to our witness as a fellowship of the friends of Jesus?

Listen for some inspiration for your soul as I read the words to Duke Ellington’s ‘David danced before the Lord,’ from his *Sacred Concert* in 1965, while Dan plays the music:

*Oh, Lord, dear Lord above, God almighty
God of love, please, look down and see my people through/
I believe that God put sun and moon up in the sky
I don't mind the gray skies
'Cause they're just clouds passing by/
Heaven is a goodness time, a brighter light on high
Do unto others as you would have them do to you
And have a brighter by and by/
Lord, dear Lord above, God almighty
God of love, please, look down and see my people through/
I believe God is now, was then, and always will be
With God's blessing we can make it through eternity/
Lord, dear Lord above, God almighty
God of love, please, look down and see my people through*