

**Psalm 29: 1-11; “The Voice of the Lord”, A Sermon Delivered by Pastor Paul  
Rendall on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, following the Terrible Storm which  
the Lord brought to the Midwest on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

This Psalm was evidently composed by king David after a tremendous wind storm came to the land of Israel and destroyed many cedar trees there. David was so impressed with the Lord’s power and His glory in this storm, that he thought it appropriate, and the Spirit led him to do this, to pen this Psalm, to show people in all generations what the right response to storms would be. And so we ourselves, having experienced a mighty storm that took place here recently in our area, we need to rightly respond to the Lord’s having preserved us through it. Therefore, I believe that it will be good for us today, to think together about what we can learn, about God and His ways, so that our faith in Him might be increased.

The question that we should ask ourselves at a time like this, is – Do I hear the voice of the Lord in the physical storms that God brings, and what does it lead me to do? To answer that question, let me ask 3 other relevant questions which I believe will help us to understand the voice of God to us in this storm. 1<sup>st</sup> of all – Has this great storm caused you to worship God and to think of the beauty of holiness? 2<sup>nd</sup> – Has this great storm caused you to reflect on God’s attribute of His power to judge men and to save them? And 3<sup>rd</sup> – Has this great storm caused you to say – Glory?

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – Does the great storm lead you to worship God and to think of the beauty of holiness?**

Verses 1 and 2 say – Give unto the Lord, O you mighty ones, give unto the Lord glory and strength.” “Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” So here we see that the mighty ones are instructed to give to the Lord glory and strength. Giving glory to God is to praise Him. It is to honor Him with your worship for the greatness and glory of His Being, and the greatness and glory of His works. Who are these mighty ones? Well, we can surely think of them in terms of those kings and rulers of the earth who the Lord has put in positions of authority in state, and in our nation. It says in Psalm 2, verse 10 – “Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you rulers of the earth.” “Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.” “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” “Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.”

To kiss the Son is to show love and appreciation for the Person of the Son of God; for all that He is, as the only Savior and Lord of all men. It is to receive His saving work to yourself by faith. This is what political rulers of nations should do; what they need to do, if they would govern people in a righteous way. You see this also in Psalm 82, verse 1 where it says, “God stands in the congregation of the mighty; He judges among the gods.” “How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked?” “Selah” “Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy.” “Deliver the poor and needy; free them from the hand of the wicked.” “They do not know, nor do they understand; they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are unstable.” “I said, ‘You are gods, And all of you are children of the Most High.’” “But you shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.” “Arise, O God, judge the earth; For You shall inherit all nations.”

So, once again here, we see the reason why God brings a great storm and great damage to an area where He chooses to bring it. It may be a judgment upon wicked leaders in state or national governments; men or women who will not defend the poor or the needy, or free them from the hand of the wicked. Leaders like this do not understand; they walk about in darkness and all the foundations of the earth (that is, of that state, or that nation) are unstable. And so warnings are given to these men; that they are not so special that they will not die like any other

men, but they should remember that they are children of the Most High God. That is, whether they know the Lord, or whether they do not know the Lord, they have been created by God to glorify God. They are not there to glorify themselves. How thankful we should be for righteous leaders like Governor Reynolds who are continually looking out for the welfare of our state in all the decisions that she makes. It was wonderful how both she and President Trump came out to view the damage and think together about what could be done for the people affected by this storm in Iowa.

Great physical storms like the one that we experienced the other day are intended by God to speak with a mighty voice to those who are in power in government, that it is God who is the Most High who rules over all the earth. The damage brought by the storm is called by Insurance adjusters an act of God. And so it is. God can bring peace and quiet to any nation or kingdom when He is pleased to do so. Or He can bring a great destroying storms that demonstrate His righteous anger and His power to men. Whenever we behold a great storm like the one that we experienced the other day, it ought to turn our attention to think about God's justice and power. He is saying – I can punish you for your sins. I can also to show mercy to you according to My divine purpose.

Think about what Paul says in Romans chapter 9, verses 22 and 23 – “What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which had prepared beforehand for glory, even us, whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?” Paul says in verse 17 of that same chapter concerning Pharaoh, the wicked leader of Egypt in the days of Moses – “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.” And so we have a great need to think about the exhortation of our text in verse 1 – Give unto the Lord, O you mighty ones, you leaders. You need to think about it whether you are living righteously and will be commended by God by God on the Day of Judgment, or whether you are wicked and unbelieving and need to come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Unless you repent you will perish.

But we should also think of the mighty ones of our text in terms of all the saints and the people of God. For God, through our Lord Jesus Christ has made us kings and priests; a kingdom of priests, it says in Revelation 1: 6. The saints are made into mighty ones of God by His grace. Therefore, if you a believer, you are to give Him glory during the storm, and you are to give Him your strength in, and during, and after the storm, so that His glory will be seen and known by people around you, and so that they would learn how to glorify His holy name. During a physical storm, you should strive to be as strong and as calm as His grace will enable you to be. And during the time of that storm you should be exercising your faith in Christ. You will remember that in Mark chapter 4, verse 35, that after a full day of ministry that Jesus said to them, “Let's cross over to the other side of the lake”. And so when they left the multitude, it says, “they took Jesus along with them in the boat as He was”. Well, He was tired.

There were other boats also with Him. “And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.” “But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow.” “And they awoke Him and said to Him, ‘Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?’” “Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace, be still!’” “And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.” Ah, what a blessing this was. But you will notice what our God and our Christ expected of them during that awful time of the storm. In verse 40 it says that Jesus said to them, ‘Why are you so fearful?’ “How is it that you have no faith?” So what our Lord was looking for, from them, and what He is looking for, from us, is to not allow ourselves to become fearful in a great storm, even though there might be every reason to be afraid, humanly

speaking. Rather, we are to exercise faith in the storm, and not be doubtful or unbelieving that the Lord Jesus will help us.

This applies to all spiritual storms and difficulties that we will face in living our life as a Christian. Furthermore, we are to worship the Lord, during the storms that we encounter; whether they are physical storms or whether they are spiritual. Think about what godly Job did when he lost all of His children and His possessions. Satan attacked his children and killed them with a mighty wind storm. It says that he arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and then he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there." "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away.; blessed be the name of the Lord."

The truth of what Job did here, we need to apply to ourselves when the storms come, whether they are spiritual or physical. Everything that you have, in terms of both relatives and possessions has been given to you by the Lord. Therefore, when they are taken from you, you should by His grace be able to give Him glory; to rejoice that he has been good to you all the days of your life; in giving you your wife, your children, and your possessions. And then to reason this way; since God is my God, He will always continue to do me good. Holiness is beautiful because you are separated unto God and His purposes, to transform you and make you like Him. It is you and Christ communing together. You are set apart to Him and to be a receiver of His love and grace. When you are a Christian, all of God's purposes toward you are good. He causes all things to work together for good, to those who love Him, to those who are called according to His purpose. There is a beauty of holiness which comes to be seen in your life, when you see God Himself as your all in all.

**2<sup>nd</sup> - Has this great storm caused you to reflect on God's attribute of His power to judge men and to save them?**

(verses 3-8)

The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders; the Lord is over many waters." "The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty." "The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars, yes, the Lord splinters the cedars of Lebanon." "He makes them skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox." "The voice of the Lord divides the flames." It is always good to remember that the Lord does all things by the word of His power. And the Lord Jesus Christ is the word of God's power personified. In the case of the Psalm that we are looking at, the voice God which is repeatedly mentioned here, is equated with physical thunder. If you search the Scriptures you see thunder mentioned over and over again, in just that way, in many places in the Scripture. Psalm 18: 13 – "The Lord thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered His voice, hailstones and coals of fire." Job 37: 5 – "God thunders marvelously with His voice; He does great things which we cannot comprehend."

When the voice of the Lord, in thunder and lightning, is used by Him, the glory of His power is revealed to men. He means for us to stand in awe of His voice. He would have us to think of Him; pay attention to Him. We are meant to consider God's very precise use of His power in His demonstrations of physical lightning and thunder. There is infinitely great power and majesty in God Himself. These are revealed in the creation, in how God uses His voice. We, as His creatures, are meant to consider the physical thunder as His voice speaking to us. We should understand that He intends to make an impression upon us so that we will consider the greatness of His wisdom and power. If God's thunder is that profoundly loud, if it makes a great impact upon us, it is so that we might consider how much greater than ourselves, He is.

It is true that the voice of the Lord was over the physical waters at the Creation of the world. In the Beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the Lord spoke and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast. The Spirit of God was brooding over the waters of the great deep. Each of the Persons of the Triune Godhead had their work to do. But they did it together,

undivided in their Essence. God designed His creation to speak to us and show us His invisible attributes, and His power is one of them. God also upholds all things by the word of His power; by His voice He upholds the whole creation in powerful and majestic ways. God has a purpose in His bringing storms. One of the main reasons is that we might magnify His work; that we take notice of how He orders every aspect of the storm, and even speak of it to one another. This storm that we had here was of God's ordering. It was 70 miles wide and 700 miles long, and it began in eastern Nebraska and it went on all the way over to Indiana. It's winds were 100-140 miles an hour, and it went on for 45 minutes to an hour. It was a Derecho storm which acted like a hurricane.

I am told that a Derecho storm is like a tornado on its side. It will quite often cut off limbs of trees at the 12 ft. level and throw them around. But you and I should know that storms like this are initiated by God's angels; a band of destroying angels who are given specific instructions on how they are to conduct themselves, by God Himself. All may appear to be random and non-specific to us, but actually it is under the perfect control of God Almighty. Listen to Job chapter 36, verse 22 – “Behold, God is exalted by His power; who teaches like Him?” “Who has assigned Him His way, or who has said, ‘You have done wrong?’” “Remember to magnify His work, of which men have sung.” “Everyone has seen it; man looks on it from afar.” “Behold, God is great, and we do not know Him; nor can the number of His years be discovered.” “For He draws up drops of water, which distill as rain from the mist, which the clouds drop down and pour abundantly on man.” “Indeed can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, the thunder from His canopy?” “Look, He scatters His light upon it, and covers the depths of the sea.” “For by these He judges the people; He gives food in abundance.” “He covers His hands with the lightning, and commands it to strike the mark.” “His thunder declares it, the cattle also, concerning the rising storm.”

In chapter 37, verse 13, it says – “He causes it to come for correction, or for His land, or for mercy.” So we see here that God has definite and particular purposes in the storm, whether they are for correction or for mercy or both. By them he judges peoples, it says here. He judges each and every person's reaction to His sovereignty over His creation. He judges each and every person's reaction to the gospel and the truth of His mighty word, which is His voice. This sovereignty includes all peoples. In this regard the Lord's voice is powerful. He breaks the cedars of Lebanon, and He splinters them. If there is anything which describe the storm that we went through here, it is this. We have had trees all over this two city area, limbs broken off and other limbs stripped and splintered. Now, if you will recall, these word pictures that used here, of waters and trees, are used in many places in the Bible to refer to peoples and individual people, and so water the Lord is driving at in using these words in this particular way, is to say to us – You see how sovereignly powerful over the physical creation that I am. I am the same way in regard to individual people and nations.

In Revelation chapter 17, verse 15, when John is being given a description of Satan's antichristian kingdom, the angel tells him – “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.” And in Psalm 96, you find these words beginning at verse 10 – “Say among the nations, the Lord reigns; the world also is firmly established, it shall not be moved; He shall judge the peoples righteously.” “Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and all its fullness; let the field be joyful, and all that is in it.” “Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the Lord.” “For He is coming to judge the earth.” “He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth.” Now, we must ask ourselves, what is being spoke of here? What is being spoken of here is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ to judge the earth. All creation will rejoice at this, no doubt, because it will be set free from the corruption brought to it by the sins of the sons of men.

But that is not what this is primarily referring to. It is referring to all believers being trees of the Lord's woods. It is they who will rejoice before the Lord at His coming to judge the world and the peoples with His truth. In Song of Solomon chapter 2, verse 3, it says, "Like an apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons." So the cedars of Lebanon mentioned in our text in Psalm 29 are a word picture of God's breaking some sinful men with His powerful voice, through His physical judgments upon them so that they will never recover from His judgment. Men like king Zedekiah in last days of Israel before the 70 years captivity. He would be judged by God's having Nebuchadnezzar come down from the North, overcome all of His resistance, His forces would be defeated and scattered. He himself would see His sons slain before his eyes, and then his own eyes would be gouged out, and he would be taken a prisoner to Babylon. He as a tree was taken down by the Lord's wind.

But in the way that verses 6-9 are worded, we see that God also has purposes of mercy in store for all those whom He would save and bring to Himself. With them, it says that he breaks the cedars of Lebanon, and splinters the cedars of Lebanon and it means something entirely different in their case. He brings His storm and He breaks them in a most wonderful way by His powerful working in their lives and in their hearts, in order to save them. He takes down their proud limbs, and He lowers their pride, and He shows them that that which they had been trusting in; that is their own strength, their own wisdom, their own views of the meaning of life; a life of sin and selfishness, were wrong. And then He turns them by using the storm that He has brought, to consider the one great cedar – that is Christ. Listen to Ezekiel 37: 22-24 – "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'I will take also one of the highest branches of the high cedar and set it out.' 'I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and will plant it on a high and prominent mountain.' 'On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar.' 'Under it will dwell birds of every sort; in the shadow of its branches they will dwell.' 'And all the trees of the field shall know that I, the LORD, have brought down the high tree and exalted the low tree, dried up the green tree and made the dry tree flourish; I, the LORD, have spoken and have done it.'"

You see, this is why it says in verse 6 of our text, that God makes them also skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion, like a wild ox. God took His Christ from the tribe of Judah, one of the highest branches of the high cedar of Israel, and set it out. He made Him through His cross to be bear our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. He was cropped off in His crucifixion. But He was raised from the dead because He satisfied fully and perfectly the justice of God against sinners, all who will believe in Him. On the mountain height of Israel God planted His kingdom, and it has been bringing forth fruit, and proving in every regard to be a majestic cedar. Under the tree of His kingdom, birds of ever sort dwell, in the shadow of its branches they will dwell. And all the trees of the field, all the nations of the world, and all of the great ones, the mighty men of the earth, shall know, and own, and acknowledge this as it comes to pass, that it is God the Lord who has done this.

He has brought down the high tree, and has exalted the low tree, and has made the dry tree to flourish. That is, individual people who once were proud, when they had their eyes opened to the truth of their own sinfulness, and saw their need of Christ, and believed in Him, they were saved. All of those mighty kingdoms of this world are to be brought down by Christ, and His kingdom, which looks small at first, shall flourish and spread very greatly, because it is an everlasting kingdom. Think of the Day of Pentecost when 3,000 people were saved at the preaching of one sermon by Peter. Before that sermon was preached, you will recall that God sent the Holy Spirit to His Church. And it says in Acts chapter 2, verse 2 – "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting." "Then there appeared to them divided tongues as of fire, and one sat upon each of them."

The storm that some of us witnessed the other day did a lot of damage to the trees of our city and of many cities in Iowa, Illinois, and on to Indiana. It was a mighty rushing wind that did tremendous damage to the trees. But brethren, see how gracious God was in this storm, that very little human life was harmed. Rather, it appears to have allowed many people around us to reach out to consider one another in a way that they never did before. Neighbors getting to know neighbors and talking with one another about their shared damage to their trees and their property. Oh, I know that this storm caused great damage and brought the great difficulty of having the trees and the brush removed and power being taken away from us for a time. But what a great thing it was to get to know our neighbors better. What a great thing that is has been have the power restored! Even though there were trees that came down from the wind, yet it has given us the opportunity to show the love of Christ to many.

Brethren, this is what happened last Wednesday when some of you volunteered and made the Grab and Go meals for many hundreds of people. They saw Christ in your actions, and they heard about Christ in the tract that was given to them. The Lord is causing all things to work together for good for us, and for the good of many people. The voice of the Lord divided the flames of fire. The word of God and the gospel is the voice of Christ speaking to sinners in every place around here. In Luke 12: 49, Jesus said that He came to send fire on the earth, and how He wished that it were already kindled! By the power of the Spirit, the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness of men's lives. It shows them how everything can change in a moment when the Lord brings a storm.

But it is by this means of His voice working like a fire in the heart and life of a person, that which secrets of the heart of a sinful person are revealed, and they see that the judgment of God upon them could bring them down to hell. The gospel may be the occasion of the dividing of one friend from another. I came not to bring peace, but a sword says Jesus, and a man's enemies will be those of his own household. But God says in Jeremiah 23: 29 – "Is not my word a fire and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? And so we must come to see how sovereign our God is, not only in bringing the storm, but also in the salvation of men, using this means of awakening them, and then according to His purpose, saving them.

**And then, 3<sup>rd</sup> – Has this great storm caused you to say – Glory?** (verses 9-11)

"The voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth, and strips the forest bare; and in His temple everyone says, "Glory!" The Lord sat enthroned at the Flood, the Lord sits as King forever." "The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace." It is because the Lord shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh, that it causes the deer who is ready to give birth to give birth. His voice causes the deer to give birth. We should see that the storm strips the forests bare, but God can cause good to come out of it in the new life that that He brings. The Lord knows how to bring the right means to bear, to bring about the good result, that fulfills His purpose. We should take notice of the wording of all of these verses. For the things talked about here in these verses are speaking of good, even though this shaking has taken place. Everything in God's temple, which is His Church, His people, says – "Glory".

God's people say, "Glory", because they remember that the Lord is a righteous Judge. He sat enthroned at the flood as King. That was the ultimate great physical storm that God brought, where it rained for 40 days and 40 nights, and all people perished except those on the ark. It says here that He sits as King forever. All the storms that God brings should point us to the Last Judgment. Do you fear this? Well, God's people glory because they see that storms make them take notice of the greatness of their God and it produces in them a godly fear. The deer giving birth is a picture of this. The Lord will give strength to His people, and He will bless His people with peace, even in the greatest storms of their life. Will you not trust in God and pray to Him for the strength that you will need to get through difficult and trying times; to face all that the Lord will bring to you in the future, in relation to His righteous judgments? To know that your

sins are forgiven and that you have Christ on the throne of Your life, bringing you grace and peace, is the greatest of blessings. And all of God's people say, "Glory"!