



Psalm 33

Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous. Praise befits the upright. Praise the LORD with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings. Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts. For the word of the LORD is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD. By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth. He gathered the waters of the sea as in a bottle; he put the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. . . . Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and shield. Our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us, even as we hope in you.

Words, we know, have power. They can heal and they can hurt; they can thrill and they can devastate; they can summon us to high purpose and they can lead us into deeds and actions that are demeaning and humiliating. Words have power.

The word of God that the psalmist celebrates, though, is more than syllables and vowels that are used by human beings to exhort, admonish, inspire and motivate. The word of God creates and destroys on a cosmic scale. *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth. He gathered the waters of the sea as in a bottle; he put the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.* Equally as impressive to the psalmist is the realization that God's word, unlike so many words that echo in the world around us that mislead and beguile, distort the truth and even celebrate the wrong, *is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.* God's word, then, is reliable and can be trusted to lead us in right paths, the path of life.

The words we hear shape us—our perspectives, our values, our priorities, our relationships. We are virtually bombarded by words—spoken, printed, electronically communicated—and by the messages that others wish us to hear, to believe, and to embrace. In this cacophony of sound it is vital for us as believers to make time for God's word that comes to us in scripture, in moments of silence when we make ourselves present before God, in the beauty of the creation that surrounds us, and principally in the person of Jesus Christ who is the Word. Otherwise, by what can we measure the veracity of all the other words we hear and speak?