

# ***A Credible Faith***

## ***I believe in God the Father Almighty***

### **October 16, 2022**

**Overarching Theme:** 2022 – The Year of the Lord’s Favor (Luke 4:19)

#### **Instructions:**

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.

#### **Core Point:**

As the world awakens from 2 years of pandemic stupor, the words of Jesus proclaiming “*the year of the Lord’s favor*” is a message whose time has come. This passage from Luke 4 harkens back to the ‘year of jubilee’ of Leviticus 25 and Isaiah 61, a year of a fresh start, a clean slate and reset for everyone who can envision new possibilities with God this year and always.

#### **Reflect on this Scripture: Psalm 148**

<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights!

<sup>2</sup> Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!

<sup>3</sup> Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!

<sup>4</sup> Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!

<sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created.

<sup>6</sup> He established them forever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

<sup>7</sup> Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps,

<sup>8</sup> fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!

<sup>9</sup> Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!

<sup>10</sup> Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!

<sup>11</sup> Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!

<sup>12</sup> Young men and women alike, old and young together!

<sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.

<sup>14</sup> He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the LORD!

### **Commentary:**

The singer of Psalm 148 calls on all elements of the heavens to praise the Lord, and in verse 5 provides the reason. The psalm singer says, at God's command all was created, the same word used in Genesis 1 to describe God's creative activity (Genesis 1:1, 21, 27).

In verses 7-14, the focus of the psalm singer's call to praise shifts from the heavenly realm to the earthly realm. Using language reminiscent of both Job 38 and Genesis 1, the singer calls sea monsters, fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind, mountains and hills, fruit trees and cedars, wild animals and cattle, creeping things and flying things, kings, and men and women, old and young to join in the praise. Every element, every aspect of creation is to join in the praise.

Verses 13 and 14 is a summary statement, a final call to all creation to praise. Verse 13 reminds us of the weightiness, the great position of God over the heavens and the earth. Verse 14 speaks of God raising up a 'horn' for his people, a word that refers to the strength God gives to the people of Israel who are close to him. In conclusion, Psalm 148 invites all creation to praise the God who is both gloriously transcendent, and very near to those who praise. Or as the Apostle's Creed affirms, God is both the "Almighty creator of heaven and earth" and like a "Father" in personal care, closeness and compassion.

- Adapted from online commentary, "Working Preacher" by Prof Nancy deClaisse-Walford, McAfee School of Theology, Mercer University

### **Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:**

1. Why is the Christian Faith credible for you? In other words, why do you believe that Christianity is intellectually tenable?
2. Is there anything about Christian Faith that you have particularly struggled with or that seems 'incredulous' to you?
3. How hard is it for you to believe that God is all-loving? Conversely, how hard is it for you to believe that God is all-powerful?
4. If God is both all-loving and all-powerful, why does God seemingly allow evil and terrible things to happen (invasion of Ukraine, for example)?

### **Activity for the Life of a Disciple:**

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: Psalm 148: 13-14 <sup>13</sup>*Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.* <sup>14</sup>*He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the LORD!*
3. Recite and Reflect on the Apostle's Creed:

#### **The Apostle's Creed**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe 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 to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic\*\* church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.