

Thankful Worship to God

Let us turn to our Bibles to Psalm 100. Psalm 100. Let us listen attentively to the Word of God.

Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands, serve the Lord with gladness. Come before his presence with singing. Know that the Lord, he is God.

It is he who has made us and not we ourselves. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise.

Be thankful to him and bless his name. For the Lord is good and his mercy is everlasting and his truth endures to all generations. Let us pray.

With this wonderful truth, Father God, may it strike anew into our hearts again. As a psalm of thanksgiving, may it be our psalm as well of thanksgiving this week and every week. Gracious God, in that here going through the text and hearing of the word preached to us, may we be drawn to more gratitude and love and adoration for Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which you have done for us, continue to do for us, and will do for us in the future.

Amen. So as, of course, thanksgiving is coming upon us, I think it's good and proper to go over our obligation, indeed, our privilege to honor and rejoice in the Lord God and his ways among us. Of course, our hearts should be ready with gratitude as the appropriate situation arises in all times in our life.

Noble times of blessing from heaven above are times to offer thanks with our lips and our hands throughout the year, not just this time and only this time. Now, of course, is such a time. Our forefathers came to this country to honor and praise our God above, and we are blessed to have such freedom still.

So although I know the world around us, I don't even think they remember Thanksgiving. You go to the stores, they've already got Christmas stuff up a week ago. It wasn't like, I sound like an old man.

It wasn't like that when I was a kid. It wasn't even like that, I think, even 10 years ago. I remember watching, it's been creeping up, and Halloween even showed up, or, of course, and the like.

So it's not very good, but for us, it's still a good time, and I pray that we can make it a blessing by his spirit. So let's look here through the simple song, simple psalm here, it's not very long, to encourage us to rejoice in the Lord's goodness to us day by day. It's a call of service, verses one through two.

A Call of Service and Joy

Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you land. Serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence, what? Singing, dirges? No, happy singing, obviously. It's a joyful shout.

When happy, act happy. We don't need to be giddy, of course, all the time, but we should not be unduly reticent to show joy, to hide our happiness before God. It's okay to smile, even to say amen.

Praise here is poetic, of course, this word as a way of writing about thanksgiving. When he says shout for joy, or joyful shout before the Lord, or sing to him, it all centers here on verse four. Enter into his gates with, what? Thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise, and again, be thankful to him, and bless his name.

These are different ways of emphasizing the more particular point of thanksgiving. The joyful shout should be a joyful shout of thanksgiving, of gratitude for what the Lord God of heaven and earth has done for you. And some may ask of the joy here, how can I have joy when life is hard? And that is certainly true, that we can have hardships in our life.

But he gives reasons here. He doesn't simply say, because it isn't imperative, hey, make a joyful shout. You ought to do this.

But I'm gonna give you reasons for this. I'm gonna explain some of these things for you. Know that the Lord, he is God, he has made us, and he cares for us, and we are not our own people.

That's the next verse. So he's gonna explain why we ought to shout for joy. And it's to whom? Make a joyful shout to the stars, to space itself, to one another.

No, to the Lord, all you lands, L-O-R-D, all caps, depending on your translation. I don't know if all the translations do that. There's a lot of translations out there, but that is an indicator to you.

It's the covenant keeping God's Jehovah, to Jehovah. It is he who has taken care of us. It is he who has made a promise to us through the Messiah to be our God, and we are his people.

That's the idea here. It's a covenant praise. It's a covenant thanksgiving.

His name speaks of his love, and therefore his dedication to our wellbeing, and that's sufficient enough to praise him, to laud him. But who is to do this? All you lands, right? Everyone is called to serve, to know, and to thank God for who he is, because everyone knows God exists. The Old Testament saints knew this.

They knew their religion wasn't just their religion in the sense of, well, the rest of the world can do whatever they want. No, they're under obligation to God Almighty as well. It's just that they are blessed because the Holy Spirit has opened their hearts and brought them to the promised land so they can see God.

But they call upon the Lord. They call upon the world to go to the Lord. Every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, Philippians 2.10. And this fits the theme here of a number of psalms up to Psalm 100.

Psalm 96, it starts out, O sing to the Lord, a new song, sing to the Lord, what? All the earth, not just Jews. Everyone is called to honor him. Psalm 97, the Lord reigns.

Let the earth rejoice. Let the multitudes of isles be glad. Israel isn't on an island, right? Even all the islands, the remote peoples, the picture here, the four corners of the earth should be glad that God is the Lord Supreme.

It reigns over all. Psalm 98, the Lord has made known his salvation, his righteousness he has revealed in the sight of the nations, right? Both in the Old Testament sense that they see God working among Israel, preserving and protecting them. They know the history, because word got out to, for example, Canaan that they came from Egypt and they're going through the desert and they survived the Red Sea.

God preserved them, washed over them. Canaanites knew they were coming. And when they got into the land and God conquered it for them, the nations around heard of these things.

And so they saw the redemptive protection of God amongst his people. But of course, in the New Testament sense, it probably is a picture of the New Testament whenever they talk about the whole world should rejoice, because it's not gonna happen in the way that they saw it as it is now. We are fulfillment of these nascent prophecies.

We are the going, we are the nations that witnessed this redemption of salvation to the four corners of the world. And then Psalm 99, the Lord reigns, let the people tremble, peoples, plural, tremble. He dwells between the cherubim, let the earth be moved.

And then this one, make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands. It's a call for everyone. So it's an evangelical call in that sense.

How can they have a joyful shout? How can the Egyptians praise the Lord or the Babylonians or Americans, unless they repent and believe? So there's an applied gospel call here as well. We want you to join with us. The best of the Old Testament saints wanted the nations to come and to rejoice before the Lord and to be one of them, in fact.

And that's what we want for our fellow citizens, isn't it? We want them to become Christians. To serve with gladness. Make a joyful shout and serve with gladness.

Serve here, the word is work, working for God in daily life, of course. But another way it could be understood is probably worship in this sense. Given the rest of the verses, like verse four, enter into his gates and to his courts with praise.

That's the temple, that's in Jerusalem. And so the priests also have this word used for them and it's translated serve sometimes as they worked or served in the temple. They were serving or working, what, for God in a unique sense.

For us, of course, that would translate to formal public worship, especially on Sunday. The Lord's Day is not to be a dour day but a time of rejoicing. We serve the Lord not only throughout our lives but especially in public formal worship.

He is the object of our praise and adoration. In that sense, we are serving like the priests serve. It's a religious activity, in other words.

It's not just your job throughout the week but our calling as Christians. And here on this Lord's Day is a time to relax both our body and especially our soul by renewing our trust in Jesus, our Lord and Savior. And of course, we serve the Lord in an analogical sense like the priests did every day.

They had the sacrifices every day. They were serving or working in a religious sense towards God. We do this worshiping of God throughout the week, not just Sunday.

So service involves that as well, a holy high calling to read his word, to sing praises before him, to have family devotions and private readings and the like. And all that we do, we are called to honor and serve him either directly or indirectly. It should be done for the glory of God above.

Here, this is, of course, direct worship is in view as God is the immediate object of shouting for joy. Thank the Lord. You can, of course, thank one another.

There's a time to do that. We have prayer blessings, I'm sure, during Thanksgiving. And we ask God to bless the cook that made the food for us.

And that's good and proper. But this is not about the cook or one another, but about God and therefore the first table of the law. It's a joyful service we ought to have as believers.

To sing before him even, right? Come before his presence with singing, with joy in our hearts is the picture here. That's why I said it's not a dirge, obviously. It's a joyful singing.

It's a happy song. It's an expression of love and gratitude towards God Almighty to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, as Ephesians tells us, and Colossians as well. And not just on Sunday, but throughout the week to help us meditate, to hide the word of God in our hearts.

Song helps get those words into our hearts. That's why we have the ABC song for little kids so they can memorize the alphabet really easily. God gave us lips, God gave us music, and we ought to use it for his glorious namesake.

To pick a glorious song for us, to hide it in our hearts, perhaps for Thanksgiving, and not just November, to sing his praises all the day long. And that leads us to verse three. A call of knowledge and creation, a call of knowledge or of creation, I suppose we can say.

A Call of Knowledge and Creation

He gives reasons here to praise him again because he is God, because he made us, and we are his people. The first reason here, to know the Lord, more broadly here, to know the Lord God. Know the Lord, for he is God.

Know that the Lord, for he is God. Let me explain to you why you ought to praise him. Let me give you some concrete reasons that he is God.

So in poetry here, to remind the Jewish readers, the word to know the Lord here, given in the imperative, is not because he believes his Jewish audience doesn't know who God is. That's not the point. He's saying renew your knowledge, go back to this fundamental truth that you have already been taught, at least the best of them, again, with the Old Testament teaching and the like.

And to look to the covenant-keeping God, know that the Lord, the covenant-keeping God, Jehovah, he is God. Know that this one who has bound himself to you as your master, as your heavenly father, and you are his people, know and understand and renew this knowledge that he is God. Have the specific truth in mind before you, or God, or Elohim, the omnipotent, worthy one of all reverence and honor.

It highlights his majesty and his might as divine being over all things. So in other words, the covenant-keeping God is not just here for a small group of Jews, because the idea of covenant, of course, is exclusionary. It's our covenant with us, the Old Testament church.

New Testament church is very much for us, clearly. And not others who are not put into the covenant. But God as Elohim means he is Lord, creator of all creation, above and beyond just the church.

It's the word used, the name of God used in the opening parts of Genesis and the creation of the world. This is our God, and we should know him and acknowledge him as ours, and we are his. We should acknowledge him that is who he is.

As such, what is God? Who is this God for us? He's not a figment of our imagination. His existence is good enough. He is the I am that I am.

And that grounds enough to rejoice in him. He is God transcendent, Lord and creator, maker of our body and our soul, master who directs our life, savior who delivers us from our foolish sins and death. This is our God.

This is what it means when he is the Lord and he is God. And also what he has done for us. So it's implied who he is, he is God, and also more explicitly what he has done, his actions for us.

Even if he had done nothing, if he'd never delivered or saved us, he is still worthy of all honor, praise, glory, and adoration. We must realize this. And that's why we have in Philippians 2.10, that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Do we believe that everyone's going to be saved then? No, it's too late. They're going to confess it in spite of themselves, as we say. And they're going to realize and have their eyes fully open.

This is whom I have rejected. He is Lord and master, but I still hate him. We got to realize that.

That's what they're saying. It's terrifying to be sure. But here, God has done more than just simply exist and that's good enough.

He has stretched out his hands for us, brothers and sisters. So we read here in verse three, it is he who made us and not we ourselves. He fashioned us.

And we see this negatively. We did not make ourselves. So on the one hand, he made us and not we ourselves.

It wasn't clear the first time. He says it again, more negatively, right? Neither physically, of course, by birth. You know, just like I feel like being born today.

Someone else made you, made your body in God's providence. And certainly not our spiritual birth, although we are told otherwise in America. You can somehow birth yourself spiritually.

In both cases, it is the creator God who did this, not we ourselves. And that's a humbling fact. This language here of God making us and not ourselves, that we are his people.

We read in the latter part of verse three, is echoed there the same idea or theme in 1 Peter 2.10. You who were once not a people, but are now the people of God, who not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. That's the picture here of the Old Testament. Not just simply, well, we have a new Lord and master, but we have a new Lord and master who made us.

He delivered us. He saved us. That's the picture here.

Not just in like he made a piece of pot. That's kind of interesting. But in making us, he is saving us.

And that's the poetic idea here. Because otherwise we would not be his people, i.e., redeemed, regenerated, justified, sanctified, and eventually glorified. He does all that.

That's him making us. Because before we were outside his kingdom, and now we are brought into his kingdom. And then secondly, he owns us.

We are his people and the sheep of his pasture. We hear a lot about being our own man, and nobody can tell me what to do. Many, unfortunately, it seems in America, adults, at least in popular culture anyways, seem to be perpetual teenagers, always fighting and being different and resisting and saying, I want to do what I want to do when I want to do it.

That's not the picture here at all. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture. He owns us.

It's as simple as that. He owns us. 1 Corinthians 6.19, again, the New Testament, because it's the same religion.

Although the outward forms have fallen away, the Jewish flavor, as it were, has now been eradicated. It is still the same church. 1 Corinthians 6.19, do you not know, Paul writes to the Corinthians, do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? You're not a self-made man in this sense.

He saves us, and therefore, he owns us. That's the common theme in the Old Testament. Not just the Old Testament, the pagan religions, which are deformations of the true religion, because they heard things from Noah, I'm sure, and they passed down to their kids, the unbelievers, and they twisted it.

But even they recognize that you have a God, he owns you, and you are his. I mean, it's a comfort here, this is part of the joy, because if I owned myself, and I was the captain of my own soul, I would be miserable indeed, as some of us have experienced in our own lives. We should take these verses to heart, in other words, for without his formation of us, we would still be most miserable and wretched beings.

This is good news. This is why we should make a joyful shout before God. Verses four and five, the second point, a call of thanksgiving and praise, a call of thanksgiving and praise.

A Call of Thanksgiving and Praise

That's the third point, excuse me, I can't read Roman numerals. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise. We know this is a well-known psalm, at least this little snippet here.

We get to the heart of the psalm. So I referenced this before, I'll make it more explicit here. Joyful shout is a reminder, the psalms, the Proverbs, Hebrew poetry is built upon not rhyming of sounds like we have in English, nursery rhymes, but a rhyming of ideas, a rhythm of parallelisms, we call it.

Parallel ideas, saying the same thing differently. You have joyful shout is parallel with serve with gladness, is parallel with come with singing. We see that in the verses one and two, same idea.

They sometimes build upon each other, but they imply it and they are connected that way. Here we have a thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is clearly parallel with praise.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise. To enter his gates is also to enter his courts. It's the same thing differently, two different ways.

Same thing, two different ways. So praise is parallel with thanksgiving. And then of course, thanksgiving again, be thankful to him, verse four, and bless his name.

It could be seen as two things, but I think it's, given the poetry nature, the same thing, to be thankful is also to bless him, to bless his name because you are thankful, in other words. And so we have here verses one to three, call to praise and given a reason then, in verse three. And then verses four and five, a call of praise and thanksgiving more particularly, enter into his courts.

And then a reason as well, verse five, for the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting. So he gives a call and then gives a reason and they're paired together. Enter into his gates.

You already know what this is. It's an Old Testament picture, a way of describing and explaining to go to church. The gates of perhaps Jerusalem, it's his city, but within Jerusalem is what? The temple.

And so the imagery may be moving from going into the gates or perhaps the gate of the temple itself. And of course, into his courts with praise. You have the courts of praise, you have the court of the Gentile, it's concentric circles.

You have the court of the women and children, the court of the men. And then you have the smallest court, as it were, of the priest. And they did their priestly functions there.

They were not allowed to get any closer. And in that picture is a picture of formal public praise in the Old Testament sense. We don't have a temple anymore.

We don't have these kind of physical boundary markers, the way they were given to them to teach them a lesson, of course, and to show them the importance of who God is and their place before him. And so here is them thanking God by coming to church, we would say today. To go to the Lord is to worship the Lord, enter into his gates, come before his presence, to go, to walk, to use these physical metaphors because God is what? Omnipresent.

And no matter where you walk, you can just stand still and he is there. What is he talking about? He's saying, we want you to move your body and go somewhere where you have a special place and a special time to honor and worship him. It's accommodating language, in other words, because we know God is everywhere, but he's put a blessing, a special blessing upon formal public praise.

Usually the Old Testament Sabbath, of course, their Saturday, our Sunday, the Lord's Day, or special times like Thanksgiving services. So formal public worship or praise of God is especially useful for our Christian growth because it assists us in putting aside distractions. It's built in, of course, to the Lord's Day, which is a whole day designed by God's will.

And if the nation would follow that, it would be much more helpful for us. We used to have blue laws. To assist us to think about him more because we have so many things in our life.

Monday through Saturday, God says, that's what you're going to get. You can stay busy. You can work, take care of your family, do something.

You got lots of freedom. But now I'm going to give you a time you set aside for me. And it's for your good, of course, because God has all the time in the world.

It's for our sake. Sabbath was made for man, brothers and sisters, not man for the Sabbath. So that we may learn more about him, to praise him, to be with the saints, although that's more secondary, but still useful.

It's especially about him. And so formal public worship is especially, especially about him. The Lord's Day is about him.

Now's the time it's even more focused. And so we have this time where distractions are put aside. So we can hear his name and sing his praises.

It's commanded by general revelation. All people know there's a God, and they know they ought to worship him and submit to him. And that's why we have so many religions everywhere on all times.

But it's especially commanded in God's special revelation, Hebrews 10, where it tells us not to forsake the assembly of the believers. To what end? So we can hear the Lord, learn about him, to pray to him as one people, to sing his praises and offer thanksgiving with a grateful heart. And of course, again, we can do that throughout the week, but it's especially here and now, because we have and are able to put aside these things and to focus upon him.

Thankfulness here, the center of the psalm. Thankfulness, of course, implies knowledge and servitude here, that we are his, and that therefore we have this knowledge of this fact, and we should act therefore upon this. We know who to thank, in other words.

We enter into his, God's gates, his special chosen place, the temple of the Old Testament, wherever we are today, in the New Testament, with thanksgiving and into his courts of praise. I bring this up because we are surrounded by talk of thanksgiving. You will hear it on the radio, maybe see it on the news and like, and they'll say, oh, it's Thanksgiving week, and now we can talk about how thankful we are.

And it always is so weird when I hear this from unbelievers, because they'll say, I am thankful, I am thankful, I am grateful, I am grateful, I am grateful, and I'm always waiting, to whom? To whom? And often, there's nothing, there's no object to the verb. It's just, I am thankful. Okay, to yourself, to random acts of chance? They don't want to finish it, because they'd have to humble themselves and acknowledge it comes from the hand of God.

You thank somebody, you thank your parents, you thank the cook, you thank your neighbor. We know this, but Thanksgiving comes along and no one wants to thank God. It's just, I'm thankful, I'm thankful about random things that kind of happen in my life.

Thankful to whom? What does that mean? Their hearts recognize they have to be thankful, and that's good, that's a start. It shows God's hand on them, that is, he's written the law on their hearts, they're made in his image. It's a fallen image, and because of that, they won't finish the rest of it.

I am thankful to God Almighty, and I should praise him accordingly. But we know, and we are gifted and blessed, brothers and sisters, that we can name the name that we should be thankful to, the maker of heaven and earth. Thankfulness involves worship, and so far as, again, God is the object of our thankfulness.

This is a reminder that worship isn't just on Sunday, it's whenever you're thinking about God. It's an act of honor and adoration, and so we speak of him throughout the week carefully. We don't use his name flippantly, or his acts, or his word, or works flippantly, in a casual manner, but we are careful, and we don't just say whatever comes to our mind.

We talk about God, we thank God throughout the week. That's an act of worship, is what I'm saying. Whenever God is the object, the conscious object of our thoughts, words, or actions, that's an act of worship, and we should approach it that way.

Hebrews 13, 15, it gives us an idea of this fact. Hebrews 13, 15, Therefore by him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. And he says what? Continually, not just on Sunday, but throughout the week as opportunity arises, obviously.

We should have a heart and a mind ready to shout for joy, to be grateful to God, and to show it through our actions and our words as occasion arises. It's very much like the other passage where he says I'm always praying without ceasing, praying without ceasing. We know Paul isn't just, you know, with his eyes closed all the time, and not writing letters.

Of course he's writing letters. He's saying I am ready and able, my mind is equipped to pray when I need to, or I'm praying as it were consistently, not necessarily every second, every day, but consistently throughout my life. And same with this, perhaps, consistently thanking the God, our God above for us.

The moral truth is the same in this matter. God is worthy of all honor, thanksgiving, and adoration for what he has done for us, to come before him with thanksgiving. He gives us reasons here.

Verse five gives us those reasons. For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endures to all generations. The first reason, the Lord is good.

Goodness finds its source in him. Any goodness that we find in this world comes from his hand. We must never forget this.

There are no random acts of kindness in that sense, right? You've seen those bumper stickers. But even the kindness of unbelievers is an expression of God's goodness for us, and for one another. It comes from him.

He is good, and he does good in all that he has done and will do, even to those who hate him, even to those who curse his name. We know this. Jesus tells us in New Testament, God the Father sends rain upon the just and the unjust, he tells us.

God does good even to those who shake their fist at him. And that's a reason to honor his name, for he is good. Reason number two, everlasting mercy.

The last I checked, you still sin. I don't know what it is. I know you're gonna sin.

Because you are a sinner saved by grace. You're not perfect yet, you still struggle. And that reminds us that his mercy is everlasting.

You are still saved in spite of your sins. Everlasting means it goes on and on forever. What? In spite of what you are doing or will do.

And that's a humbling thought, isn't it? It's a struggle as a sheep, of course. We are all sheep. I'm a sheep falling into ditches because of our foolishness.

But God's loving kindness overcomes our stupidity, morally speaking. It's everlasting. We should cling to that.

We should thank the Lord God Almighty for that. He covers our sin with the everlasting blood of the covenant of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer. And so we can carry on.

We should be thankful for that or we'd be despondent all the time. Dwell upon these wonderful truths and mercies. And the third reason he gives us here, that we should enter into his courts with praise and be thankful to him and bless his name.

His truth endures to all generations. His truth, probably his mercy. I know in the American context, perhaps the Western European context, the Greek context, which is a history of Western civilization, we may think of the word truth as an abstraction.

But often again, in the poetry, he tries to find different words to say the same thing. And we start out with God is good and his mercy is everlasting. And I think the truth here is not just the truth of God, but the truth of his mercy and his goodness for us.

It's what he has done for us is the idea here. Because it's to generation to generation that he's been good and he's been merciful to the church of old and the church of new today. Mercy itself.

And it's from generation to generation whether from one family to the children, to the grandchildren, or from one family to another family. Collectively speaking, it's as it were going through all the generations of history for us in the church and the existence of the church that the sheep of God are preserved. And he saves them in spite of their sins.

And his mercy and his love will go on and on and on as he goes on and on and on. And his goodness is always for us directed towards our growth. The everlasting truth is a powerful reason for a heart of gratitude.

That we have this knowledge, we're not left in the dark, and we are saved. He's moved from that knowledge, moved our hearts towards repentance and faith and trust in him. This is a

wonderful reason to thank him all the day long, to be grateful for every little thing and the greatest gift of Jesus Christ.

We have reasons today, of course, they are sufficient, many. These are right here, just simply reading this perhaps on Thanksgiving day. He is God, he made us, he owns us.

He is good, his mercy is forever, and his truth is from generation to generation. These are sufficient reasons to praise him, to lift him up. But we can add more.

We can write out a list of specific ways in which God has provided for us and for our kids and for our church and for our communities. But in all these things, brothers and sisters, we should cast aside any distractions or sorrows and lift our eyes to heaven with hearts of gladness and joy and praise, that we would enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise, to be thankful to him and bless his name always. Amen, let us pray.

We do praise you, God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I ask that all of us would praise with our hearts and our lips this morning that we would be drawn by your spirit to this truth. And Lord, may it continue to humble us and strengthen us as well at the same time to carry on our Christian walk throughout our lives and throughout this week in particular, Lord God Almighty, that our hearts and our minds would continue to think upon you, to be thankful and to be grateful for what you've done for us.

Through Christ Jesus, our Lord and Redeemer and Master. Amen. Let us stand.