

Sacred Songs, Life Lessons

A Song of Thanks

Psalm 100

June 23, 2024

HDBC

Psalm 23 may be most well-known of all the songs in the Bible's songbook. Psalm 100 2nd. One of the first passages that I learned as a child. When I read this psalm I almost always think about VBS. It must have been a psalm that was memorized during one or more of those great events. I love this psalm. It is positive, encouraging, and even fun. In this songbook that contains a lot of ballads and blues, we need a few light-hearted but powerful expressions of joy. This song fits that bill for that.

Franz Delitzsch – says this psalm has a *sunny cheerfulness*.

Many of the psalms are emotionally wrenching. Often the psalms expose the depth of human suffering and the despair that often accompanies it. But not this one. This one is an alive with joy and gladness. It seems to be energized with happiness.

A couple of preliminary things to share:

First, this song was **written for everyone**. Look at verses 1 & 5. Do you see the phrases? ***All the earth. All generations.*** This is for people all over the planet. People of every age and walk of life. All humanity.

Second, this is an **action song**. Only 5 verses but there are seven verbs. Verbs are important. They imply action, movement, response. Notice them.

Shout, Serve, Come, Know, Enter, Give, Bless

Third, this song is an **invitation from God**. Though the verbs could be seen as imperatives, and therefore commands, I think the general tone of this song is more of an invitation rather than a command. God is inviting us to enter into fellowship with him.

This is one of the great themes of the Bible. We can have a personal and intimate relationship with God. He is not a distant deity but a God who desires close and continual fellowship. All throughout the Bible we see this.

God walked with Adam in the cool of the day.

He established a personal covenant with Abraham.

He told Joshua not to be afraid, for He would be with him.

He became a friend and protector to David.

He became flesh and dwelt among us. Incarnation.

He came in the person of the Holy Spirit to live in us.

I want you to know that God really desires fellowship with you. He wants to interact with you. **Not only** does He want to fellowship with us in a casual way as we work our way through the day. He also desires to have some one-on-one time with you. Some personal time. Time when you and He can relate, talk, etc. Quiet time. Fellowship with God. Meeting with God.

This song gives some insight into **how we enjoy that fellowship.** Three important things to remember when fellowshiping God.

1. The Entrance (4)

We are invited to enter his gates and his courts. What does He have in mind by gates and courts? Most likely he has the tabernacle and later temple in mind. That was the place where the Old Testament people could meet with God. In the temple there were gates and courts. Each must be passed through in order to approach God.

Today we do not have a temple. We do not have to go through physical gates and courts. But the principle is the same. We are drawing away from the workaday world to a private place to meet with God. We are invited to **leave the hustle and bustle of life and draw aside** to spend some time with Him. He is inviting us into His wonderful presence. Don't stand outside the doorway peering in. Come into His presence.

Enter His Gates with Thanksgiving

Audible recounting of the wonderful things God has done for us. Remind you that God loves a thankful heart and notices when we are not thankful. **Remember the 10 lepers?**

Enter His Courts with Praise

Thanksgiving is recounting the wonderful things God does for us. **Praise is a recounting of his nature & character.** Focus on the person of God. Praise Him with words, thoughts, music.

2. The Perspective (3,5)

When you pray and worship, remember to whom you are relating. **If I'm talking to a child, I may speak in a different way than when I'm speaking with an adult. Adult my age different from adult who is my father's age.** When we come into the presence of the Lord for worship or prayer there are some things that we are to know. **Four things.**

He is God (3)

Talking to the divine one. The one who controls all things. Knows all things. Needs nothing. Self-sufficient, self-existent one. **Not Santa Claus, man upstairs, rich grandfather, etc.** He is God!

Realization of this is confirmed in our absolute obedience and submission to his will. We quickly acknowledge that Jesus is the son of God, but much more slowly do we demonstrate this belief through our actions. We are still a very selfish people.

He Made Us (3)

He is our creator. He is potter and we the clay. **We often pray as if we made Him.** He is there to meet our needs. When I speak to Him, I must remember that I'm speaking to the one who made me. He made me exactly the way I am. He gave us our looks, abilities, personalities, etc. We must accept that we are the way we are because he has made us that way. Realize that he has a purpose in that.

God is still making us. He is not finished with us. We are still in the process of being remade. He is shaping us to look and act like Jesus.

We Belong to Him (3)

This is not a negative thing, but a good thing. The image is that of the shepherd and sheep. So often we want to be the shepherd. But that role is for God and God alone. Realize who we are in relation to Him.

We belong to a benevolent King. In ancient Israel, a Hebrew slave had to be set free after so many years. Offered his freedom. But if, he chose to remain a slave he could do so. Owner would pierce his ear with an awl. That was a sign that this slave was bonding himself to his master.

The pierced ear in a servant was a sign that he had chosen to remain a servant. It was not a reflection on the slave, but on the master. People would see that and say **What a marvelous master he must have.**

We don't go to him making demands. We belong to Him.

He is Good and Faithful (5)

He is completely dependable. **Good in verse 5.** Means to be pleasant, agreeable, delightful. How different from the concept that many people have of God. He takes no delight in smashing our dreams or in making us miserable. He is no celestial bully. He really is good.

3. The Expressions

Three Practical Expressions of Praise and Worship

Shout (1)

Literally means, *to raise a shout or to give a blast.* As with a trumpet or other instrument. Make some noise. There is certainly a place for quiet meditation and reflection in worship, but there is also a place to make some noise. What is it that we are to shout? **Swindoll makes a few suggestions: Great! Fantastic! Amen! Praise God!**

These are **verbal expressions of praise & thanksgiving**. God says to all earth-dwellers, “shout words of joyful approval to me!” We surely can’t expect others who are not believers to do what we are unwilling to do.

Sing (2)

God desires that we sing to Him in praise and worship. The emphasis is not only on singing, **but on singing with joy**. Pleasant look on your face when you sing. Some of you are singing, but there is no way in the world you could be thinking on the words and still having those frowns on your faces.

The people of this world rarely smile. **Glance at the person in the car next to you at the red light? Watch the shoppers at Wal-Mart. Notice the patrons at the bank. Almost none will be smiling.**

Don’t be like them, especially when you sing in church. Sing with joy. Lighten up. Dress up your testimony with a genuine sense of joy. It will be contagious. **Do an experiment. Smile at people who are frowning. Make eye contact. Watch what will happen.**

Bless His name(4)

Hebrew word, *kneel*. We bless the Lord when we kneel before Him. It is a sign that we are yielding to His authority.

4. The Exit (2)

Serve the Lord with gladness.

We serve Him in and through our praise. But it does not end there. Real service begins not when we enter this room, but when we leave it. We should leave our times of prayer and praise with a commitment to serve Him. **There may be many good reasons why you feel you can’t serve God. But don’t worry, you are in good company.**

Moses stuttered.

David's armor didn't fit.
Timothy had ulcers.
Hosea's wife was a prostitute.
Jacob was a liar.
David had an affair.
Abraham was too old.
David was too young.
Peter was afraid of death.
Lazarus was dead.
Naomi was a widow.
Paul was a murderer.
So was Moses.
Jonah ran from God.
Miriam was a gossip.
Gideon and Thomas both doubted.
Jeremiah was depressed and suicidal.
Elijah was burned out.
Martha was a worrier.
Mary appeared to be lazy.
Samson had long hair.
Noah got drunk.
Moses had a short fuse. So did Peter

We are to serve him with gladness, not with griping. I've known some believers who were willing to serve, but they did it with a chip on their shoulder. Always complaining. That's not the kind of service the Lord wants. The Lord wants service that is completed with a deep and sincere gladness. Spring in your step, smile on your lips, and sparkle in your eye.

These are **Sacred Songs** with **Life Lessons**. So, what are the life lessons from this sacred song? I have three to share with you.

1) A thankful heart starts with the right focus.

That focus is on who God is and what God has done. Those who show no gratitude to God prove that they fail to understand who God is and what He does. Or it proves that they are failing to consciously think about who He is and what He does. When you gaze upon God and think about the good things He has done for you, the natural response is thanksgiving. **Thankful people look at what they have rather than what they don't have.**

2) A thankful heart is expressed in outward ways.

Thankfulness is not intended to be felt only. It is intended to be expressed, outwardly. Tell others you are thankful for them. Tell God you are thankful for Him and for what He has done. Expressions of thanksgiving honor God and keep us focused.

3) A thankful heart is a glad, joyful heart.

Remember the positive words in this song. ***Shout, gladness, joyful.*** All of these remind us that a thankful heart is not a melancholy heart. It will not hurt you to show some joy and gladness. Your face will not break. Let's decide to push our natural tendencies of negative thoughts and expressions into a backroom closet in our minds and close the door.

Let's decide that joy and gladness are more appropriate demeanors of living, because of who God is and what God has done. Let's smile more, laugh more, sing more, and thank God more.