

# Psalm 100 - The Joy of Worshipping the Lord

*A Psalm for giving thanks.*

*Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*

## Exordium

I believe that Christians are to be the most joyful people on the planet. We have a direct relationship with God because we have been forgiven of our sins, and Christ's righteousness has been imputed to us. There is therefore now no condemnation for us (Romans 8:1). We no longer sit under the wrath of God (Romans 5:9). We are no longer children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3), but adopted sons and daughters of the God of the universe (Romans 8:15). We experience the love of God being poured into our hearts in this very moment (Romans 5:5). Non-believers have no hope in this world. They are searching for hope and love in every place that promises them relief, but they will never find eternal hope, peace, and love. However, we have these not because of merit, but because of the promises and blessings bestowed upon us by God in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

We should be the most joyful people in the world, in America, in North Carolina, in Rockingham County, in Eden, and on our streets. Joy should emanate from our hearts continually as we give praise to Christ because He saved us from our sin, the world, the devil, and an eternity in hell. Our joy that is shown to the dark, dying world is likened to the moon. The moon shines brightly

in the night as it reflects the glorious beams of the Sun. Likewise, joy bursts from our souls because the Son has given us tremendous grace, mercy, love, compassion, and care.

So, over the next few weeks, we will hone in on the joyful life of the Christian. This morning, would you describe your life as one of joy? Does praise to the Father, Son, and Spirit pour from your heart and mouth during the day? Would other people say that they see joy in your heart, soul, and life? Would they be able to detect joy as a direct result of knowing the saving grace of Christ Jesus? Have you true joy this morning that comes only in Christ Jesus, or do you have worldly / temporary happiness that masquerades as joy because you are not Christ's and He is not yours? Sure, we all walk through seasons of anxiety, depression, apathy, etc., and joy may seem distant in those moments, but in the totality of your life with God, do others seriously connect Christ with joy in your life?

My thesis for these verses is that all humanity is summoned to praise the Lord with a joyful heart because He is good, His love endures forever, and He is faithful to all generations.

## Psalm 100:1-4 - Summoned to Worship

Psalm 100 was used to call the people of God to worship Him as they stood at the gates of the Temple. They would have been summoned to come worship Yahweh with glad hearts, making a joyful noise, and offering thanksgiving sacrifices, as detailed in Leviticus 7:12-15. The people would be immersed in an environment of thanksgiving as their worship was directed to the great God of Heaven, focusing on His love for them and His wondrous works. The summons was for people to remove themselves, spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically, from the world around them and to enter the very presence of God. This is the nature of worship, which we will tackle soon in this sermon. When we gather for worship, we are spiritually brought up to Heaven through Christ by the Spirit, in God's very presence to praise Him joyfully. In His presence, Christ is our only hope. Christ is where our hearts cling. His banner is raised high, and

we praise Him, and Him alone.

In Psalm 100:1-4, there are seven commands: “Make a joyful noise” (Verse 1), “Serve the Lord” (Verse 2), “Come into His presence” (Verse 2), “Know that the Lord, he is God!” (Verse 3), “Enter His gates” (Verse 4), “Give thanks” (Verse 4), and “Bless His name!” (Verse 4).

It is largely believed that this Psalm was written sometime after the Babylonian Exile. The Jews have been allowed to come back to their land to resettle. This gives us some historical context. Furthermore, Psalm 100 is the first hymn of the Trinity Hymnal. If you open up a Trinity Hymnal, you will see the first hymn, “*All People That on Earth Do Dwell*,” with reference to Psalm 100.

As we examine Psalm 100:1, we find the first command: “Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!” The Psalmist summons the people to make a joyful noise or a shout of joy, as they come into the Lord’s presence. Coming to worship the Lord is a celebratory event in the life of His people. When we come on Sundays to worship the King of kings and the Lord of lords, we come with hearts full of joy. “Can you believe that God has summoned us together to worship Him? Can you believe that the Holy One wants to dwell with us today?” This should be the melody that our hearts play as God calls us to worship.

Notice to whom the call is given in verse 1, “all the earth.” God summons all people to worship Him. This same call applies today, and we have the confidence that one day all people will bow the knee before Christ Jesus. Philippians 2:9-11:

*Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

All people will bow the knee and all their tongues will confess that Jesus is Lord. For what reason? To the glory of God the Father. The truth is clear - one day, dear friend who does not follow Christ, you will bow the knee to Christ. You will confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Christ is present now, and you can declare that Jesus is Lord by grace through faith this morning, or you can put it off until the Day of Judgment. To do

so now would mean that you receive the grace and mercy of Christ. To put it off until Judgment Day will only result in you receiving eternal wrath. I plead with you, do not put Christ off. Run to Him today. He is able and willing to save you from your sin. Do not delay. Come to the One whose burden is light.

Come, all, both saved and yet to be saved, to your Creator and worship Him. There is a universal call to worship because God's reign is, in fact, universal over all the earth. He deserves our worship and praise because He fashioned us.

The second command, "Serve the Lord with gladness!" reminds us of the Exodus, where Moses told Pharaoh that the Israelites must go into the wilderness to serve, or to worship, Yahweh. We are commanded to worship the Lord. How? With gladness! We are to have merry hearts when we come into God's presence to worship Him. If we are being honest, I think we can all state that this can be difficult at times. Sometimes our hearts are distracted away from joy on Sundays due to circumstances entirely outside of our control. Someone almost hits us as we drive to worship. We get a text message from a family member who slights us. You get a bad report from the doctor on Saturday. We all have those situations occur from time to time.

However, how often do we come to worship without joy, and could it have been prevented? We stay up until 1:00 am watching sports, television, or scrolling social media on our phones. We then come into God's presence entirely exhausted, due to our own spiritual negligence. We jump onto our phones in the morning, open a news or social media app, and then see something that causes our blood to boil. Aren't there a plethora of ways in which we distract ourselves from worshipping Christ as we ought?

So, this morning, is your heart set ablaze by joy as you dwell in God's presence? Does the love of Christ so fill our hearts that joy radiates out, and it is unmistakable? If we were to open the doors of this sanctuary, would those walking into Walmart hear the voices of the congregation singing with such joy that they would think, "There is clearly joy in that place as they worship! They know something of God."

We come to the third command in verse 2, "Come into His presence with singing!" Here we must ask a crucial question: "How can one come into His

presence,” or maybe worded slightly differently, “Who can come into God’s presence? Who can go into the heavenly temple where seraphim cry out holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory?” We find the answer in Isaiah 6:4-7:

*And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!” Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”*

The only way by which we can come into God’s presence to worship with joy is through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We have no leg to stand on if we were to come into the Lord’s presence without coming through Christ. He, and He alone, is the reason we enter the heavenlies praising with joy. Not only is our salvation in Christ alone, but our very worship in the presence of God is in Christ alone. Let there be no mistake, we could not worship God with joy if it weren’t for the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is central to our worshipping, glorifying, magnifying, and exalting God the Father. Here before the Father, we dwell with Christ, for He is not afraid to call us His brothers and sisters.

One of the errors I detect in our current generation is the minimizing of the gathering of saints on Sunday mornings. This has become optional for Christians in our culture. I’ve heard many misguided brothers and sisters say, “I have Jesus, I do not need to be connected to a local church.” This became a concern for a church that I know, and the pastors began to have serious conversations around this issue. There was genuine pastoral concern for their flock. There was a discussion about the current culture, and how twenty years ago, people attended Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening services, but those days are long gone.

Though these statements might be true, we ought to disciple people using Scripture to pierce through their faulty cultural beliefs. Take a look at Hebrews 12:22-24:

*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*

David Clarkson wrote an excellent book entitled “Prizing Public Worship.” In this book, he argues, for a variety of reasons, corporate worship is superior to private worship. As he makes his case, he uses Hebrews 12:22-24 to reveal how, when believers gather in public worship, they are spiritually brought into the presence of God to joyfully worship Him alongside innumerable angels and the saints who have gone before us. So, for something that may seem mundane at times, there is something beautiful that occurs as we gather together at Mount Zion. Christ and His atoning work are the key that unlocks this reality. Due to the sacrifice of Jesus, our great Mediator and High Priest, we are drawn up into God’s presence to worship Him with innumerable angels and the saints that have gone before us, and by faith, that is what is happening right now. We worship with joy because of the joy given to us in Christ.

The fourth command is found in Psalm 100:3, “Know that the Lord, he is God!” The command is emphatic. This command is more than a mere mental assertion. It is a call to acknowledge that Yahweh is truly God. You can imagine how this might be provocative in their culture. The Israelites had already dealt with the Egyptian gods, the Assyrian gods, and the Babylonian gods. This statement is confessional in that it emphasizes the truth that Yahweh is the only true God, but also declares to non-believers what we believe. Today, we participate in this when we recite the Apostles’ Creed or the Nicene Creed. Yes, we are saying what we hold to be true, but we are also declaring to unbelievers what we believe is true.

Then the command is followed by incredible truths: “It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” This would have reminded the people of Israel that they were made by God as a people through the Abrahamic Covenant, by the Exodus, and by Him keeping them through the exile. They were made as a result of God’s Word. They are His people and the

sheep of his pasture. What incredible imagery, and what incredible promises.

This imagery and these promises also apply to us. We have been made God's people through Christ. We are the sheep of His pasture. When we think of this imagery, I believe we often reflect on Psalm 23. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want... We also understand that Jesus is our Great Shepherd, which is made clear in John 10:11-15.

Yet, I found myself asking the question, "What is a pasture, and what is the purpose of the pasture?" The pasture is the location a shepherd places his sheep so that, and here's the purpose, he can care for the sheep's needs. When we consider our relationship with God, we understand that Christ has taken us from the desert—a place with no food, no water, no love, no grace, and no mercy—and has lovingly placed us in His pasture. His pasture is a place of grace, mercy, compassion, and steadfast love. He tenderly puts us in His pasture so that He can provide spiritual sustenance for our lives.

As we come to Psalm 100:4, we find three final commands: "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!" All three commands reiterate what has been written previously: A call to come into the presence of God with joyful hearts, exalting Him for His wondrous works.

God commands that we come into His presence, as a people, to worship Him.

## Psalm 100:5 - Reasons to Worship

This verse provides three reasons why we are commanded to worship God: 1) He is good, 2) His steadfast love endures forever, and 3) He is faithful to all generations. Before we look at each of these wonderful attributes of God, we must consider why we worship.

If someone were to ask you, "What is the purpose of the public worship service?", what would your answer be to them? The Pew Research Center posed this question, and there were a plethora of answers given: "I want to ensure my children have a moral foundation, I have a religious obligation, I want to meet new people, I want to become a better person, and I want to make my spouse

happy.” However, the overwhelming answer was, “I want to be close to God.”

This last answer is a bit of a double-edged sword. On the positive side, I do believe the Holy Spirit imprints on the believer’s heart that Sunday morning worship is special. True believers understand that we do not attend so our children will have a moral foundation, or we want to be better people, or we want to make our spouses happy. The Spirit causes our hearts to profoundly understand the importance of Sunday worship in our spiritual lives. We see this in new believers. They might not understand the biblical and theological reasons as to why Sunday worship is important, but they understand that it is essential to their lives. They, through the Holy Spirit’s leading, know they are in God’s presence.

Now, the negative side of that double-edged sword of “I want to feel close to God.” There is a strand of subjective emotionalism to that answer, and it can be man-centered. The gauge of “How was church today?” becomes a subjective answer based on our emotions. Can I share a secret with you all? Our feelings, at times, can certainly lie to us. How many of us can attest to a conversation that we thought went horribly, yet find out later that the other person thought it was fantastic? Or, how many of us have done a presentation that we thought was miserable only to receive excellent feedback? Or, how many times have we experienced the opposite? We believed we really did well, only to find out it was an utter failure. Haven’t we all experienced a day that we thought went well with our spouses, girlfriends, boyfriends, or children, only to hear the dreaded, “I think we need to talk about our day...” From your significant other? Our feelings can lie to us, which means we need to ground the purpose of the public gathering in Scripture.

This week, while studying this specific question, I read through Geerhardus Vos, Herman Bavinck, Louis Berkhof, John Frame, and others. However, I believe Joel Beeke gives us a fantastic definition of public worship:

*Public worship is the open and affectionate work of God’s church, gathered in his holy presence through his mercies in Christ by the Spirit, in which the church honors God in a believing and obedient response to his Word.*



I sat thinking through that definition for a while. We are gathered in God's holy presence. How? Through God's mercies given to us in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. The public worship of God is trinitarian - glory, worship, and praise are given to all three persons. Our response is to honor God by believing and obeying His Word. I walked around this sanctuary for a while before I even noticed the next sentence - "Each part of this definition is grounded in Psalm 100."

I hope that when you prepare your hearts for public worship, you will remember these realities. You would remember that you are being summoned, called, and invited into the throneroom of heaven for a holy convocation with a holy, righteous, loving, good, awesome God through His mercies in Jesus Christ the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit. This small amount of time we spend each week is meant to glorify God in a holy meeting with hearts full of gratitude and joy. Have you had this understanding and heart entering worship today, last week, or over the last five years? Or have you, like I have, unfortunately, on many occasions, allowed subjective emotionalism to determine the state of your heart in public worship in the presence of the Holy Triune God?

Now we find the three explicit reasons the Psalmist notes for the seven commands. First, God is good or kind. The Psalmist points us to the truth that the God we worship, serve, and love is inherently a good God. Yet how many times have we heard these piercing questions: "If God is so good, then why are children and women trafficked? If God is so good, then why do children die of cancer? If God's so good, then I do I or my family member have to deal with incredibly difficult medical problems? If this God is so good, then why did Hurricane Helene create mass flooding that resulted in the deaths of almost 110 people in North Carolina? If your God is so good, as you claim, then how come dozens of people were killed at Camp Mystic a few short weeks ago? If that's a good God, I want nothing to do with Him."

These questions pierce us because we know the pain of those who ask the questions. We know the pain of getting a medical report that brings terrible news. We know the pain of suddenly losing a family member or friend. We know the pain of reeling from bad news. Yet, we can see beyond the pain, hardships,

trials, and tribulations and see Christ, who is infinitely good. Oftentimes, it is when the canvas of our lives is painted midnight black with pain that the bright and glorious riches of God's goodness shine the brightest. The goodness of God shines like golden beams from heaven in the midst of a torrential hurricane. Where are these golden beams the brightest on the darkened canvas, dear brother and sister? The cross where the Son was raised high for our sins, for our transgressions, and for our iniquities. So when storms come our way, from a mere rain shower to a tsunami, we can boldly declare that our God is good because He loved me enough to send the Son to take the wrath meant for me, saving me from certain eternal damnation. We know that the majesty of God can be beheld by faith before, during, and after the storms. We hold to the anchor that is Christ, and we praise and worship with joyful hearts, declaring, "The Lord is good!"

The second reason given to worship God is that God's steadfast love endures forever. This reminds me of our opening Scripture from Jeremiah 31:3:

*I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.*

The word for steadfast love is *hesed*, which speaks of God's loyal love to His people. The love of God is eternal. I love what Geerhardus Vos wrote regarding Jeremiah 31:3:

*The best proof that He will never cease to love us lies in that He never began.*

As Ephesians 1:3-4 states:

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.*

You were chosen by God in Christ even before the foundation of the world was put in place. How marvelous is that truth? The steadfast love of the Father for you extends into eternity past before the world was set in motion. Further, the faithful love of God towards you extends into the future. There will never be a

day when God's love does not apply to your life, heart, and soul.

Yet, how prone we are to forget the steadfast love of God. As Robert Robison wrote in the beloved hymn, *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*:

*Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love.*

Though our hearts will wander, and though we feel that pull often, we can be assured that the love of God never leaves His children. The people of Israel would have understood this as they stood at the Temple gates after returning to the land following the end of the Exile. Do you see His magnificent love? Do you see it in the nails that pierced His hands and feet? Do you see His love on the thorns that caused blood to flow from His head? Do you see His love in His atoning death? The steadfast love of God shines the brightest at Calvary.

The third and final reason the Psalmist gives for worshipping God with joy is God's faithfulness to all generations. God's faithfulness is clearly seen in Scripture. When Adam rebels against God, God promises to send an offspring who will save His people from their sin. Genesis 3:15:

*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."*

He remained faithful to this promise by sending His Son. Jesus crushed the Serpent's head in His death and resurrection. John 20:11-14:

*But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing.*

Christ defeated the serpent. Christ's sacrifice paid the penalty for our sin. In Christ, God's wrath is satisfied. And God's faithfulness to us is never-ending. This is why we can sing, "Christ is mine forevermore," for He is good, His love endures forever, and He is faithful to all generations.

## Closing

We have ample reason to worship the High King of Heaven. As we close, how will you worship the Lord in our closing hymn? Will your heart be set ablaze with joy by the riches of Jesus? Let us worship Christ with hearts full of gratitude, for He is worthy of all our worship.