Praise God!
Psalm 100

Worship is the most important thing we ever do. Whether it is public worship or private worship, it is absolutely the most important thing we ever do, the worship of God. Worship is so vitally important to God that the first four of The Ten Commandments deal exclusively with worship.

Our church is not at its best when we are feeding the hungry, although that is a good ministry. Neither are we at our best when we are clothing the unclothed, yet that is essential to the ministry of this church. We are not at our best when we are housing the homeless; however, that is a ministry goal, and a noble one at that. We are not at our best when we are champion social justice and crying against oppression and discrimination, though those are things that every church should do. We are not even at our best when we are giving our tithes, offerings, yet that is a Biblical mandate.

We are at our best when we are worshipping God and when we are giving Him praise, honor, and adoration. When we are singing praises, when we are praying to Him, preaching about Him in the worship experience, we are at our best. If we are worshipping with our whole heart, with the mind and heart in tune and focused upon Him, we are at our best. We have to be careful that our worship is not shallow, stale, static, and stagnated. We have to be careful that our worship is not hollow with traditions, more focused on style and not sincerity.

Psalms were songs that the people of Israel would sing. Psalm 100 is a beautiful song that describes how to get up close and personal with God at any time and in any place. Psalm 100 is a call to Thanksgiving. The title literally reads, "***A Psalm of Shouting***."

A professor at Northwestern University, Vicki Medvec, found that bronze medalists in Olympic sports are quantifiably happier than silver medalists. That makes no sense at all, because silver medalists beat the bronze medalists, which means they should feel better about the outcome than those who lost to them. Here's what Medvec discovered. The silver medalists tended to focus on how close they came to winning gold and weren't satisfied with silver. Bronze medalists focus on how close they came to not winning a medal at all and were just happy to be on the medal stand. The technical term for what's happening here is called a counterfactual. There are two kinds of counterfactual. There's an upward and a downward counterfactual. An upward counterfactual is focusing on how things could have been better, like winning gold instead of silver, and it tends to produce feelings of frustration. A downward counterfactual is focusing on how things could be worse, like not winning a medal at all, and it produces feelings of gratitude.

Psalm 100 counterfactual is about how blessed and grateful David is, and it sets the context of worship. There is a healing power of worship. In worship, God sews us up. The first Hebrew definition of the worship in Scripture is "healing," and it means "to mend by stitching." This is the meaning of Jehovah-Rapha. If you have had stitches, you know someone has to touch you, and it takes time to stitch up the wound. Worship is when you express your love to God. Worship is when He puts His hands on you and stitches you up. He pulls out the needle of faith and the thread of hope and stitches your life back together. This is important because life will tear us apart, but worship heals us. The in and out of His healing is through worship. Slow down and allow Him to speak to you and bring healing to you. There were many instances of instantaneous healing for the body in the Bible, but the soul is different. It takes time. It takes stitches. As we worship The Great Physician, He moves in us as the in-and-out of His stitching pulls the wounds of our life back together.

Five Commands for Thanksgiving And Gratitude from Psalm 100:

1. **Worship God Joyfully.**

"Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Serve the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs." Psalm 100:1-2

When the Bible speaks about shouting, it's suggesting a happy cry, a vocal but joyous tone. The Bible is inviting us to be joyous in exhortation, and enthusiastic in our expressions that can be heard. It's important to verbalize your love to your mate, and the same is true of us as believers. We need to verbalize our praise to God. We need to say, "Lord, thank You," out loud. That means when we come to worship, we should sing those praises to God.

"*Shout for joy to the Lord*" is the command! We have something to shout about! He is awesome! The psalmist does us a favor. He shows us what worship ought to look like on the outside. What he says really should revolutionize the way we come into God's presence at any time, whether it is in church on Sunday or in our quiet time on Monday. He says real worship always involves shouting, serving, and singing.

The word for ''shout'' in verse 1 means, "*a sound that splits the ear*." I don't think the psalmist was saying we ought to come to church and scream, or yell, or act like a crazy person. The same God who said, "*Shout for Joy*" said, "*Everything must be done decently and in order*." 1 Corinthians 14:40

What the psalmist was talking about here was energy, enthusiasm, and excitement. One of the defining characteristics of heaven is that it's joyful. We will live happily ever after. There is so much joy waiting on us that we can make a little withdrawal on it. In the book of Revelation, John saw worship going on in Heaven; and it was exciting, expressive, emotional, and enthusiastic! Revelation 19, verses 1 and verse 6 say, "*After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: 'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God'... Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: 'Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.* "'

Vocal praise unto the Lord is kind of out of fashion in our world, but it is still in vogue in God's economy! When we verbally declare our praise for Him, it glorifies His name and brings us into His presence. May God give us all a shout in the soul that will find expression on the lips!

"Shout for joy" - If you're lacking joy, you have to rejoice your way back to joy. Practice until we have it. We keep waiting for joy to run us down, but we have to practice our way into it.

The lyrics of Charles Jenkins' song affirm that:
"My God is awesome, He can move mountains, keep me in the valley, hide me from the rain.
My God is awesome, heals me when I am broken, Strength where I have been weakened, forever He will reign.
My God is awesome, Savior of the whole world, Giver of salvation,
By His stripes I am healed, My God is awesome.
Today I am forgiven, His grace is why I'm living, Praise His holy name.
He's mighty, He's holy, He's great, He's Deliverer, He's Provider, He's Protector,
My God is awesome."

David had this attitude in Psalm 34:1 when he said, "*I will bless the Lord at all times. And His praise shall continually be in my mouth*." At all times. It is easy to bless the Lord when everything is going well, but David did not say, "I am going to do it in the good times." He said, "I am going to do it at all times."

David wrote this psalm in the cave of Adullam where he was hiding from Saul. He has been anointed to lead, and yet he is hiding in darkness. He recognized that he can turn his cave into a cathedral, not because he has the ability to escape his circumstance, but because he can, through the power of praise, bring God into his circumstance. You do not change the environment, you change the atmosphere.

Real worship gives you:

- A Sense of God's Presence
- A Surety of God's Provision
- The Satisfaction of God's Protection

Do you know why you hear birds chirping in the morning? The bird has been given another day to chirp. The bird has come through the darkness of the night, and they are singing in the morning. There is something about being truly glad about worship when you are a child of God.

"This is the day the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad!" Psalm 118:24

David said, "*I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord*." Psalm 122:1

That is why you should come before His presence singing! Life could be worse! The burdens could be more difficult! If you come before Him with a little joy, He will give you more joy!

"The joy of the Lord is your strength!" Nehemiah 8:10

If you come before Him with just a little of the right spirit, He will give you more of His spirit!

Praise is not the sum total of worship. Praise sets the stage and atmosphere for worship. Praise precedes our worship. Praise helps us encounter God in the fullness of worship.

In his book, Worship Three Sixty Five, David Edwards writes, "When we praise God, we are ringing the doorbell of Heaven, making our presence known, letting Him know that we have come to see Him." - David Edwards

When God hears our praise, He opens the door and invites us to come in. When we go inside, we go from praise to worship! When we go inside, and we are standing before His Holy presence, worship happens in multiple ways. If there are any people on this planet that ought to be thankful, it ought to be believers. We will eat more food in a day than most of the world will eat in a month. We will drive air-conditioned automobiles, forgetting that billions of people never even own a car. We've got more clothes hanging in our closets than the average person in the world will ever see in their lifetime. We will sleep in a bed when much of the world will sleep on dirt floors.

Always enter into His presence with thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is the music that brightens the face of God. It is the spark that warms the heart of God. It is the love that kisses the hand of God. I don't care how bad off your situation is, everyone has something they can always be thankful for.

With thanksgiving, you get into the gate, but with praise, you get into the court. God wants you to come into His presence, and when you do, before you ask Him for anything, thank Him for what He has done and praise Him for who He is. You may know that the Hebrew word for "praise" is the word "halal." It literally means, "to be excited with great joy."

If you woke up this morning with more health than sickness, you are more blessed than the million people who will not survive this week. If you never experienced the dangers of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the suffering of torture, or the hunger pains of starvation, you are better off than 500 million people in the world. If you have attended this worship service today without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death, you are better off than 3 billion people in the world. If you have food in your refrigerator and clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of this world. If you have any money in the bank, in your pocket, or even some spare change, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthiest people. If you can read one word in a book or sign your name, you are more blessed than over 2 million people in the world who can't read or write at all.

How could we ever even think about entering into God's presence without thanking God in His presence?

"Praise The Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in the heavens of His power! Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him according to the abundance of His greatness! Praise Him with trumpet sound; praise Him with lute and harp! Praise Him with tambourine and dance; praise Him with stringed and wind instruments or flutes! Praise Him with resounding cymbals; praise Him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath and every breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord." Psalm 150:1-6

2. **Serve God Gladly.**

"Serve the Lord with gladness!" Psalm 100:2

The word "*gladness*" means "*mirth or joy*." We are to look upon our service to the Lord as a cause for rejoicing. Instead of seeing it as a chore, we are to view it as a privilege afforded to those who have been redeemed by grace and who have been chosen by the Lord to do His work and will in the world.

You may be thinking, "Wait a minute. I thought we were talking about worship. Where does service come in?" The more up-close and personal you get with God, the more you want to serve God, the more you want God to use you, and the more you want God to be blessed by what you can offer Him. Service is a part of worship. One of the ways you worship God is by serving.

The closer you get to God, the more happy you are to serve, and the more your service makes you happy. When you begin to see your service as an act of worship, and when you begin to see what you do for God as an act of gratitude for what He has done for you, you will no longer see service as a duty, but it will be a delight. It won't be a job. It will be a ministry. Serving God is completely and totally different from serving anyone else. The motivation for this is in Acts 17.

All you wonderful volunteers out there that help us park cars - that is part of your worship. Our first impression people who work the Information Desk, hand out worship guides, stand outside in the cold and the rain and greet people as they come in, that is a part of worship. Our wonderful volunteers in children and student services, they serve the Lord, and they do it gladly. All of the wonderful people working till midnight in the Judgment Day "*serve the Lord with gladness*." You haven't really worshipped God until you get involved in serving God.

"*Nor is he [God] served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything*." Acts 17:25

We are to serve God with gladness, because when we serve Him, we are not bearing the burden of meeting His needs. We are rejoicing in a service where He meets our needs. God doesn't need us serving Him to make Him happy. We need to serve God to make us happy.

We are to never allow our labor for the Lord to become a drudgery. We are not to "*grow weary in doing good*" - Galatians 6:9.

3. **Know God Personally.**

"Know that the Lord, He is God!" Psalm 100:3

The Hebrew word for "*know*" does not mean to know intellectually. It means to know by experience. The psalmist is not talking about a head-knowledge, but he is talking about a heart-knowledge. You cannot worship God correctly until you know God personally.

You've got to know there is only one God, and that God is the Lord. The foundational truth of the Old Testament is that the Lord is God. The foundational truth of the New Testament is that Jesus Christ is Lord. The foundational truth of the Bible is that Jesus Christ is God. You cannot worship God until you know and understand this - there is only one God and one Lord, and His name is Jesus.

Sometimes we come into a worship service and are conscious of who is standing around us, in front of us, and behind us, and we are afraid of what they will think if we raise our hands or if we sing loudly and joyfully. When we come to worship, let's stop thinking about what other people think about us and more about what God thinks about us. When we come into His presence, He ought to know by the way we act and the way we worship that we are glad to see Him. The purpose of our worship is to get to know God and to know Him better and better and better.

“Beyond a doubt, it has been my personal fellowship with the Lord, to be able to talk with him, to hear from him, and to have his guidance and presence in my life, has been my greatest joy.” – Billy Graham

“I can take my telescope and look millions of miles into space, but I can go away to my room and get nearer to God in heaven than I can when assisted by all the telescopes on earth.” - Sir Isaac Newton

The closer we get to God, the more we experience God. The more we experience God, the better we know God. The better we know God, the greater we love God. The greater we love God, the quicker we obey God; and the quicker we obey God, the happier we will be in God.

Theses verses reminds us that we are His flock. We are under the protective oversight of the Good Shepherd.

“*It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, the sheep of His pasture*.” Psalm 100:3

We are sheep, so we follow our Shepherd. Acknowledge that the Lord is God. He has made us, and we are His. We are His people, the sheep of His pasture. It is God who made us, and it is God who sustains us. Everything we have has come to us from God. Every breath we breathe. Every beat of our heart is from God. We are His. He has promised us:

- His Presence - Hebrews 13:5
- His Peace - John 14:27
- His Provision - Philippians 4:19

A smart sheep will listen to the Shepherd because we know we’re defenseless. We know we’re prone to wander. We know we do a lot of things wrong. We know our Shepherd is looking out for our welfare. When he tells us to move, we move. When he tells us to stop, we stop.

All of these things are summed up in the words written by David and recorded in the 23rd Psalm. “*The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures.”* Psalm 23:1-2

Sometimes we don’t know when to lay down and rest. He makes me lie down in those green pastures, then He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. David goes on, describing this unique relationship. I love the statement of Jesus in Luke 12:32. He said, “Fear not, little flock. It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” That’s who we are. We’re a little flock, but we have a great Shepherd, and it’s His delight and His joy to bless us and give us the kingdom.

That covers it all!

“*Thank the Lord. Praise his name and tell the world what he’s done.*” Isaiah 12:4

4. **Praise Him Thankfully.**

“*Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise*.” Psalm 100:4

Thanksgiving isn’t an activity that was to be done in a corner where one could be hidden from the view of others. There should be no shame attached to our worship of the Lord. The Psalmist draws from the day-to-day experience of pilgrims who traveled a long distance to the Holy City of Jerusalem. Those pilgrims had been on those dusty roads for days and nights, traveling through the heat and hills, and when the city of Jerusalem and the Temple were in sight, they started singing. When they got to the gates of the Temple, they sang out to the gatekeeper in a chant, and the gatekeeper would open the gates for them. The gates were a part of the outer wall of the Temple. We enter God’s presence through the gates of thanksgiving! That is why we are commanded to come before Him thankful! We extol God through our praises! Praise moves us closer to God!

David identifies these two places, "*the gates and the courts,*" because in every ancient city inside the gates, the walls of the city, is where court was held. This is where decisions were made. This is where citizens who wanted judgment came and found a ruling on their issue. David is saying that when you have thanksgiving and praise in your life, you go into the very courts of heaven and you receive decisions on your behalf from the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

In Ruth chapter four, we read about Ruth and Boaz. Boaz decides that he wants to find out who has the legal right to marry Ruth. Ruth 4:1, "*Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat down there just as the guardian-redeemer he had mentioned came along*."

Why did Boaz go to the gates? Because that is where court was held. They enter into a negotiation, and ten verses later, Ruth 4:10 says, "*I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses*!"

Today, through the power of praise and thanksgiving, you can go into the very place where decisions in heaven are made concerning your life here on earth. The angels that surround the throne and the saints who have gone before are nothing more than witnesses to what God is declaring on your behalf. When you worship the Lord, you do not have to wait for a judge to clear his docket to hear your case because you are going to the place where there is a King who is above kings and a Lord who is above lords. It is in that court that you do not have an advocate with a good reputation for all of the victories that He has won here on earth. You have an Advocate with a name that is above every name, who has risen from the grave, and has been seated at the right hand of God the Father.

Our Praise Of God Has Many More Expressions:

- **Bowing Down**

The Hebrew word, "Barak" means "to kneel or bow down in quiet humility, reverence, and expectation before God."

Psalm 95:6 says, "*Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord...*"

- **Clapping**

Psalm 47 says, "*Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. For the Lord Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth. He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet. He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved. God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted*." Psalm 47:1-9

- **Lifting of Hands**

Psalm 63:4 says, "*I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.*"

Psalm 134:2 says, "*Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the Lord.*"

When the hands were lifted toward Heaven, it was a sign of adoration and praise. It was symbolic of lifting up the Lord and glorifying Him. It is also a sign of surrender. It is a recognition that everything belongs to God.

- **Dancing**

When David contemplated the presence and greatness of the Lord, he got a case of happy feet and praised the Lord unashamedly before all those present. 2 Samuel 6:14 says, "*Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the Lord with all his might*."

Psalm 149:3 says, "*Let them praise His name with dancing...*"

5. **Praise God Confidently**

"*For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations*." Psalm 100:5

God is good all the time. He loves us with an everlasting love that will never fail. He is faithful to us at all times and in all places, and He never fails to keep His promises. No wonder we ought to want to be up close and personal with this unbelievable, magnificent God.

How often do we base our confidence on things that are constantly shifting? We put our trust in bank accounts that fluctuate, weather forecasts that change by the hour, or promises from people who—despite their best intentions—occasionally fall short. When life feels unpredictable, it is easy for our praise to become hesitant, conditional, or tied entirely to how good our week has been.

Yet, Psalm 100 calls us to enter God's courts with praise, and verse 5 gives us the unshakable foundation for why we can do so without hesitation. Notice that our confidence doesn't come from our current circumstances or our own strength—it comes from God's unchanging character. Because His goodness never runs dry, His love has no expiration date, and His faithfulness outlasts every generation, we don't have to praise Him cautiously. Let us look at what it means to praise God confidently, anchored entirely in who He is.

- **Praise God For His Goodness.**

"*For the Lord is good*." Psalm 100:5

This seems like a limited description for God, but the word means "*pleasant, beautiful, delightful, glad, joyful, precious, expensive, and righteous.*" Everything God does is an expression of His goodness! We can praise our God because He is good! Regardless of what happens in life, God is good! No matter how things turn out, God is still good! Therefore, praise Him for His goodness!

One of the greatest blessings of God's goodness is Ezekiel 34 where he says, "*I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing*." Ezekiel 34:26

God pours His goodness out in small ways that make a big difference. Just like there are 90,921 drops in a gallon of water, a gallon of water can do a lot, but it is comprised of many small drops of blessing. For instance, to grow an acre of corn. You need one inch of rain per week in a normal period of time (27,154 gallons per acre) and two inches per week during the period of time it is producing corn (54,308 gallons per acre). That is a lot of drops of rain. God's blessings are like drops of rain, and we have to be thankful for every drop.

- **Praise God For His Grace**.

"*and his love endures forever*." Psalm 100:5

We can praise God because He is constantly extending His love and mercy to us as we go through life. We live in a time when everyone wants what's coming to them. Not me! If I got what was coming to me, I would get an eternity in hell. If I got what I deserved, I'd experience the undiluted wrath and fierceness of the Almighty! Instead of that, God deals with me in love and mercy. He holds back His wrath from my life.

2,000 years ago, God's Son, Jesus, took my place on a cruel Roman cross. While He was dying, all my sins were transferred to Him, and He died in my place. As He was dying, God looked at Jesus and saw my sins. He saw me

hanging there that day and poured out His wrath onto the person of His Own Son. God extinguished His wrath toward me that day, and now, I enjoy mercy!

His mercy will never be exhausted, Lamentations 3:22-23 says, "*Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness*."

- **Praise God For His Faithfulness.**

"*His faithfulness continues through all generations*." Psalm100:5

While the years pile up, not a single promise of God's Word will fail! What He has promised will be as good in 10,000 years as it was the instant He promised it! When He tells you He loves you, you can count on it. When He tells you He'll save you if you come to Him, you can count on it. If He tells you that He'll take care of you, you can count on it. If He tells you He is coming back to get you, you can count on it. If He tells you He'll keep you saved, you can count on it. God is faithful and will show up in every generation of your family. Do you need God to show up in your life?

Psalm 22:3 says, "*God inhabits the praises of His people*." Do you need God to show up in your life? Are you waiting for His hand to do something? Are you waiting for a mountain to move? Are you waiting for a breakthrough? If you need God to show up, the Lord inhabits the praises of his people. It means He literally comes and sits down in the environment where His name is being praised.

When God shows up, the brokenhearted are made strong and mended in His presence. When God shows up, the weeping that has endured for the night is exchanged for a shout of joy that comes in the morning. When God shows up, those who are sick in their body are healed. The lame can leap. The dumb can speak. The deaf can hear. The blind can see again.

Whenever God shows up, those who are in the battle are crowned more than conquerors. When God shows up, troubles turn into triumphs, and trials turn into victories, because that is the kind of God that we serve. Do you need a breakthrough today? Do not talk about what you want to change. Praise the name of the God who changes everything.

It is through your willingness to give God praise and thanksgiving that you experience His presence and walk in the victory that the Bible declares you can have in Jesus' name.

When you understand the power of praise, there is no reason for you not to feel like a victorious Christian. He has already given us the victory. We have the victory! All we have to do is give Him thanks and praise for what He has done.