

Psalm 100

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Preacher: David Helm

[0 : 00] Psalm 100. Please stand for the reading of God's word. Psalm 100.

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, 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.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Seated. Well, if ever there was a day in the life of this church to give thanks to God, this must be it.

[1 : 14] I think of this being the first service in these refurbished facilities. But I also think of the fact that two years ago on this weekend, we became Christ Church Chicago.

And if that's not enough, 24 years ago on this weekend, 37 people took vows and moved to the city to establish what was Holy Trinity Church.

And so what a day. What a day. What a day to give thanks. Of course, I'm well aware that for many of you, you walked in today maybe for the first time and were not aware that this is the first service. And therefore, we're not anticipating giving thanks for that. More, I'm sure, of you did not consider or were not here two years ago when Christ Church Chicago was formed online with vows in the midst of COVID.

And so you were not anticipating thanks for that. Only a few of you would have been old enough and around long enough to be celebrating today and this weekend in regard to thanksgiving to God for a journey set out so long ago.

[2 : 38] Truth be told, giving thanks is a rather hard thing to do. Truth be told, the world continues to heave on its axis.

Hatred continues to emerge from every corner. Sorrow seems to find its way behind every door. The fomenting nature of our anxious spirits yet rise against one another and against God. And we wonder how long it might be that God continues to foment against us.

And yet, here's a psalm that asks you to give thanks. Did you catch the prescript?

A psalm for giving thanks. As though the writer wanted to convey with unmistakable clarity why he wrote what he wrote.

[3 : 45] It's the only psalm like it out of the whole psalter, 150. The only one where they put it in bold notes for you before you begin to sing it.

A psalm, a song, give thanks. Put your eyes again on verses 1 and 2. Make a joyful noise to the Lord all the earth.

Serve the Lord with gladness. Come into his presence with singing. Here, the request for thanksgiving is made. Here, the invitation is sent out to the reader.

No, even more than that. Here, the songwriter appears to put down some divine obligation upon us to give thanks.

We're commanded here to give thanks. In triplet poetic form. Make. Serve.

[4 : 47] Come. These cascading commands to give thanks. And they're all in the plural form.

It's written to the collective people. You all are to make and serve and come.

It's interesting. It's almost universal. Look at verse 1. Make a joyful noise to the Lord all the earth.

All the earth, the songwriter says, is to rise on its feet and give thanks. All the earth, collectively, you all are to give thanks.

You are to make joyful noises. You are to serve with gladness. You are to come with singing. I don't know what condition you came in today.

[5 : 51] But this is God's word reminding you of the divine imperative. That you were made to give thanks to God.

I've often wondered. Could it be that the world heaves on its axis and that hatred rises in our hearts and that anxiety causes us to lash out?

Because, as another writer says, though they knew God, they did not honor him or give thanks. Therefore, he gave them over.

Could it be that the lack of thanksgiving among the citizenry of the world is the reason for which God takes his hands off your desires and lets you go your own way?

Could it be that this is the psalm that is the eternal corrective for the condition of our world? Give thanks, all of you, all the earth.

[6 : 58] And look at the way it's described. What does giving thanks to God look like? First, making a joyful noise to the Lord.

This is a fascinating word here. This word noise. I've often said to a couple of my elders who don't have the best singing voices.

You know, the Bible says make a joyful noise and some of you just make a noise joyfully. But hey, better that than nothing, right? The word noise here is elsewhere translated like a great shout.

Now, I know that there are times when you come into the presence of God in all quietness. But in this psalm, the earth, all the people of the earth are to come into presence.

And they are to make in an audible way from their own lips a joyful noise. A shout! I mean, you think of it back in 1 Samuel 10, where this word is also used when Samuel is getting ready to anoint Saul as king.

[8 : 19] And he says to him, Do you see him who the Lord has chosen? There is none like him among all the people. And here it is. And all the people shouted. All the people made a joyful noise.

And this is what they said. Long live the king! And what the Psalm 100 is trying to say is that the Lord lives!

He lives! It's to be shouted from the mountaintops. It's to cascade into the valleys. It's to emerge within the alleys of your life.

The Lord lives! He lives! Joyfully, I am to say, he lives. Amen. He lives.

It's also a word that's used by way of triumphant acclamation. This shouting also is in a sense used to call an army to battle.

[9 : 22] It's of a trumpet or of a musical instrument that actually puts forward an alarm. It is the jolting nature of the audible tone that says, I am joyfully proclaiming the Lord lives.

That's what giving thanks looks like. That's not all, though, in the text, is it?

You give thanks to the Lord by serving the Lord with gladness. The word for serve here is used early in Exodus when Moses is wondering whether or not God is with him.

And God says to him, well, you get to the people to the mountain and you'll know I'm with you. And when you get the people to the mountain, they will serve me. Other translations, they will worship me.

And what you find is that when they arrive at Exodus 19, you're filled with anticipation as the people of God gather together for the first time to learn what worship is, what service is.

[10 : 36] And then from chapter 20 all the way through chapter 32 in Exodus, you learn what it is to serve God. You learn what it is to worship God. And what they do is they gather around his word and God speaks for 13 chapters.

And so what worship is, what service is, is the glad, the glad attentiveness of mind to the word of God that I might live under all of it according to the fullness of what I can understand.

That's what worship is. That's what service is. Service is the joyful listening to and living under all you understand God's word to be giving you.

That's what this psalm is saying. To give thanks to God is not merely collectively to sing loud shouts to God, but it is to listen quietly and attentively to his word that you might live under his word in all ways.

So that worship never ends. Not only serving the Lord with gladness, but coming into his presence with singing.

[11 : 45] This is just beautiful because too many of us can arrive into the presence of the Lord collectively. This is come you plural into his presence with singing. Not every week.

Do you feel like singing? But if your heart's like mine, when I hear God's people begin to sing, I begin to sing. If your soul is languishing in ways that you cannot utter even the whispers of joyful noise, then come at five o'clock and sit quietly as you hear the congregation sing until the very singing of your brothers and sisters raises your own heart to joyful praise.

This is what it is to give thanks. To shout joyfully.

To serve gladly. To sing intimately. Oh, that it would be true for all of us.

I know it's not true for all of us, though. You might say, well, that's what the Bible tells me to do. But I don't know that I'm quite there yet. It's interesting.

[13:09] The writer seems to perceive that the listener isn't necessarily eager to fulfill all the things he wants them to. And so a reason for giving thanks is provided.

Look at the text. Verses one and two, we are requested to give thanks to God. But verse three, that request is not without reason.

Here it is. Know that the Lord, he is God. Let me throw this tag on it. Know that the Lord, he is God. Still God. Still God. And notice that it's the Lord, this word that's all capitalized letters.

This is a word in the Old Testament for Yahweh. This is the word that when Moses said, who am I supposed to say is sending me to redeem the people?

[14:13] God says, well, I am who I am. And all of that movement becomes to come under this word, the Lord. The Lord is God. The Lord of the Hebrew people who chose them that they would be a blessing to all the families of the earth.

The Lord that selected them. The Lord that led them. The Lord that, here it is, redeemed them. The Lord that cared for them. The Lord that shepherded them. The Lord that says, you are a guilty people, but you will be my people.

This is the Lord. He is God. And for many of us here today, how do I worship God? The psalmist would say, you worship this Lord God.

Not a God of your own making, but a God that is revealed to you in the scriptures under the hand of his Holy Spirit. This is the reason you are to give thanks.

Why do I give thanks? Because the Lord is God. Still God. That's the rationale for it. Now, God's godness, as it were, is expressed in certain terms here, verse 3.

[15:26] What is God's godness like? It says, it is he who made us. And we are his. We are his people. And the sheep of his pasture.

In other words, it's expressed in terms of God, the Lord, being your creator. The old way we used to sing this was, it is he who made us and not we ourselves.

You didn't make yourself. The Lord God is the creator of the heavens and the earth. The Lord God created you. Therefore, the Lord God ought to receive praise from you.

You're not your own. We're not autonomous creatures. We were created for his glory and for his purposes.

We're created to give him praise. He is the one who made us. We are his. Notice the way it describes the godness of God in these intimate terms of both creator and sustainer and redeemer and caretaker.

[16:34] It says, we are his people and the sheep of his pasture. In other words, the Lord was Israel's redeemer. It was Jacob who said, the Lord has been my shepherd all the days of my life until this day.

And the very next line, he is the one who redeemed me from all evil. And if you know anything about Jacob's life, he was a mess. And what he wants to say is, the Lord shepherded me.

The Lord found me. The Lord pulled me. The Lord loved me. The Lord cared for me. The Lord redeemed me. He is my creator. He is my redeemer.

These are the reasons for which the psalmist says you are to give praise. And the image that's thrown upon the idea is sheep of his pasture. You have here God as shepherd.

The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. So you ought to give thanks today.

[17:40] Why? Because the Lord is God. Still God. But you say, I'm not quite ready.

The psalmist seems to almost know that one round won't get it done. Notice the way he now in verse four, the request for us to give thanks is repeated.

He repeats it as though he's walking with you and you're listening. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him.

Bless his name. It is though the second verse of the song is needed to press home the truths to our hearts that were already stated. And just as the first command came in that form of triplets of commands, make, serve, and come.

So here, again, in triplet form, enter, give, and bless. And why?

[18 : 53] Notice a second reason is provided. Verse five. For the Lord is good. Oh, still good.

Amen. Pastor Pace, Pastor Nia, and myself spent a couple days together in Wisconsin studying.

And we spent some time studying this psalm.

Unbeknownst to me at the time, the Lord had been ministering to his own heart in the orchestration of the song he gave us today as an offering. And I asked him, I said, would you be so kind as to allow us to enter into your pain?

But the song that came out of it, if we would indeed preach from this very text as we open the service. Notice how his goodness is expressed.

His steadfast love endures forever. And his faithfulness to all generations. That's the description of God's goodness.

[20 : 12] This steadfast love and justice. Do you know the first instance where God's goodness is described as steadfast love?

It happens at a very interesting moment in Israel's history. They had just been made his people.

They had just come out of Egypt under the blood of a sacrificial lamb.

They had just found their way to the mountain and he was up speaking with Moses. And in the midst of all of God's goodness, the people began to go their own way.

The making of the golden calf, even before the preacher got out of the mountain from hearing from God to give them his word. They had already neglected and disregarded all of his goodness.

And the golden calf incident comes and great judgment, great justice, even in the text here, great justice falls upon the people. And then Moses says, but I want to see you.

[21 : 14] I want to know you. What's your name? And God, in that moment, when God's people had rebelled against God, God says, well, I won't pass by in ways that you can see me, but I'll give you my name.

I am the Lord God. Slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love. The steadfast love of the Lord became descriptive of his goodness at a moment when the people knew they were sinners.

And that ought to cause you and me to give thanks to God. He's faithful. And he's faithful to all generations.

If the image in the first part picks up on God as shepherd, the image in this part seems to pick up on God as king, but a gracious king, a kind king, a forgiving king.

And I say a king because he says you are to enter into his gates and into his courts. Well, what are these gates? Where are these courts? It is not the building in which you sit.

[22 : 23] It is not a church to which you may attend the rest of your life. For God, the heavens are his throne. The earth is his footstool.

He will not dwell in houses made with hands. In fact, everything that's established here is simply a pattern of the heavenly gates and the eternal courts in which God dwells.

That's where you're to enter. You're to go from the reading of the psalm, the embracing it by faith, the understanding that there is a God, and the Bible tells me he is good, and I by faith go enter into his gates, into his presence with thanksgiving.

Oh, may we never forget this. Hebrews 9.

And he'll say later in chapter 10. Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter into the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is through his flesh, let us draw near to the house of God.

[24 : 06] Jesus himself brings these two images together in the psalm of both shepherd and king. He actually says in John 10.

I am the good shepherd. And I lay down my life for the sheep. Do you know that this morning for the sheep? Do you know that this morning for yourself?

Do you know that there is a God? Do you know that there is a God? Do you know that he has patterned things here on this earth that you might see the reality of what he's doing in the heavens?

Do you know that he sent his son to die for you, to redeem you, to make you his child, to change your heart, to relieve you from the hatred and the anxieties of this world and the weariness which heaves on its axis?

And to provide you purpose to know that you are now in his family by faith received, asking Jesus blood to be applied to your life in ways that your heart would be made new.

And in the making new of a heart, suddenly the spirit of God dwells you. And from your lips come songs of praise because of how great he is, how faithful he is, how kind he is.

[25 : 32] I remember to this day the shag carpet upon which I put my knees and plunged my fingers through and watched my tears fall when I saw there's a God and that that God is good and that he would take me for his own.

I got up off that carpet and gave my life to continually seeking what he might have. That's what I want for you.

For some of you, you've forgotten that God's good. You're living in sin even after being his child. But then what sacrifice would there be for you oh today, may this be the day where some begin to establish a relationship with God by putting your faith in Christ.

I cannot think of a better way for you to begin learning how to give thanks to God but by giving your life to Jesus.

that would be a good day wouldn't it? That would be a good day wouldn't it?

[27 : 02] said the Australian evangelist. You come into church because somebody brought you and you go home giving thanks to God as one of his children forgiven, clean.

there's also no better way to restart your thanksgiving to God than by repenting of your disregard for Christ.

If you're trapped, if you're caught, if you've fallen back, if you're living as though you are the son or daughter of a different father than the one that you embrace by faith in Christ, if there's a corner in your life that owns you that you don't give to him, then today is the day to demonstrate to him that you have disregarded the sacrifice of Christ and you repent.

I'm just going to say as the final hymn goes today, I mean, from the moment it begins, I'm going to ask Pastor Nee just to stand over here, Pastor Pace to stand right here and and if you need prayer to begin with God, you come find them, they'll help you give your life to Christ or if you need to repent and put your knees, well, it's not shag carpet and you don't want to talk to a pastor or an elder but you just want to come forward, get on your knees and pray to the Lord then you do it because this call to give thanks to God is universal it's eternal it has good reasonableness to it there is a God he is good and he deserves our very best these then are the things in which we give thanks to God in our loud shouts and in our glad service thanks be to you in our singing thanks be to you for you alone are God still God thanks be to you you are a creator and our redeemer thanks be to you in our entering and in our giving thanks be to you as we come to your courts and your gates thanks be to you for you alone are good still good thanks be to you you God the Lord are steadfast in your love and your faithfulness thanks be to you thanks be to you thanks be to you when and where would we go and not give thanks to you our heavenly father as we look at your word today we're in awe of its poetic beauty and while the writer has asked us to consider you as shepherd and king we we cannot help but think of psalm 23 where a different writer says well he is my shepherd and I will dwell in his house forever

I pray Lord that this psalm which speaks to the world would become the psalm that we testify to in our own life Lord by the power of your spirit and by the strength of your word enter in come serve inhabit change hearts even now convict hearts to the point that they mean business with you save even here under the hearing of my voice that we might fulfill your plan for us in Jesus name words