

Psalm 95

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[0 : 00] Again, today's scripture reading is Psalm 95. If you need a Bible, please raise your hand and an usher will bring one to you.

You can find Psalm 95 on page 553 of the White Bibles.

Please stand as you are able for the reading of God's word. O come, let us sing to the Lord. Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving. Let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise. For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are the depths of the earth. The heights of the mountains are his also. The sea is his, for he made it. And his hands formed the dry land.

[1 : 00] O come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord, our maker. For he is our God. And we are the people of his pasture.

And the sheep of his hand. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massa in the wilderness.

When your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work. For forty years I loathed that generation.

And said, they are a people who go astray in their heart. And they have not known my ways. Therefore, I swore an oath in my wrath.

They shall not enter my rest. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Have you experienced a missed opportunity by rejecting an invitation?

[2 : 10] Take for example, in my own personal life in high school, in 2011, the class at Lindbrook High School. In San Jose, California, I was invited a formal invitation to a graduation party.

And I declined it. All my friends were going. I was ready to be done with high school. And yet, when this graduation party happened, I knew I made a mistake three days later.

And all of my friends were talking about the wonderful celebration they had. There was a hypnotist. There was games, food, videos of the four years of the hard work of high school.

And at that moment, I knew I missed out on a huge opportunity to celebrate. An amazing time of joy reflecting on the four years of high school.

Have you experienced that kind of missed opportunity by rejecting an invitation? Well, this morning, we're going to encounter an invitation from Psalm 95.

[3 : 30] Now I've titled this sermon, An Invitation You Don't Want to Miss. Now I want to convince you this morning to persuade you of this invitation.

This argument. Rejoice in the Lord by listening to His voice. Again, rejoice in the Lord by listening to His voice.

We're going to see this invitation broken down in three movements. Beginning with verses 1 to 5, an invitation to rejoice.

And then in verses 6 to 10, an invitation to listen. And then lastly, in verse 11, the consequence of rejecting this invitation.

So let's begin with verses 1 to 5, an invitation to rejoice. See, the psalmist calls the congregation to come in verses 1 and 2.

[4 : 32] And the author of the psalm includes himself with the congregation. Did you notice four times the psalmist says, O come, let us sing.

Let us make a joyful noise. Let us come into His presence. Let us make a joyful noise. See, the psalmist is calling forth, inviting the congregation to declare the praises of God.

To the Lord. Observe what is repeated there too. Two times in verses 1 and 2. To make a joyful noise.

See, this invitation is marked by happiness, joy. It's a call to rejoice. It's an invitation to rejoice. But why? Rejoicing in who? What reasons should cause us to rejoice? See, the psalmist connects and tethers the rejoicing to the person and work of the Lord.

[5 : 47] Did you notice with me in verse 3, the three-letter word there, 4. Why should you rejoice?

Well, it's because the Lord is a great God and a great king above all gods. See, the reason for the rejoicing is because of the Lord.

The greatness of the Lord. Well, what makes God so great? What makes this Lord so great? What's the work of His hands? Did you see the imagery there in verse 4 and 5?

In His hand are the depths of the earth, the heights of the mountains are His. And in His hands form the dry land. See, it's the work of this great Lord in His creation that is the reason to rejoice.

The mighty hands of God displaying His greatness in His creative works. Forming the mountains.

[6 : 52] The beauty of what He creates. See, this God, this Lord is the great Lord who creates.

See, for the people in Israel, they were called and invited to rejoice. And so it is with us that we are invited to rejoice in the Lord.

This is an invitation that we each week as we gather together here at Christ Church Chicago. We gather to sing to the Lord.

To use our voices collectively, corporately to give praises to God. To rejoice in Him and to Him. This is the great invitation that we have each week to come to rejoice in Him.

And yet this raises a question. Some of us may not feel joyful today. Well how do we experience joy when we're having a bad week?

[7 : 58] Well, I want to acknowledge that some of you maybe this past week have had a difficult week. Maybe in the home, raising children and it was just a hard week.

Or at work, a difficult situation. It would be a difficult relationship or a conversation that you had this week. A circumstance that was hard.

Or maybe on the opposite side. Maybe this was actually a great week. Maybe you have gotten promoted or experienced just an awesome week at work or at school.

Well, regardless of the circumstances, and those circumstances are real. See, this psalm is inviting you to not look at yourself.

To not look at the circumstances for your joy. But to look to the Lord. The psalmist is inviting us to stop and stare and be dazzled by the Lord and His mighty works in creation.

[8 : 57] See, I was reminded this week that literally a year ago I was traveling from Portland, Oregon to Chicago, Illinois. And a few observations on this journey to come here.

One, America is great and large. I had to travel six states to get here. Not only that, I had to pass through Mount Shasta in California.

Yellowstone, the Grand Tetons. The Black Hills. All of this corn in South Dakota. I had to pass through so much of just amazing.

Amazing landscapes and glorious clouds and shapes of getting from Portland, Oregon to Chicago, Illinois. But this psalm reminded me, as great as the landscapes in America is, that actually declares on how great the creator of those landscapes is.

Namely, the Lord as creator. That is supposed to fuel and draw our desires and affections to give praises to our God.

[10 : 06] To rejoice in the Lord. Because He is the great creator. I mean, isn't it compelling that the Lord invites us to rejoice in Him?

Isn't this the celebration? Isn't this the celebration? The kind of joy and delight that you've always wanted? The Lord is inviting you to this kind of joy and rejoicing.

See, this is an invitation you don't want to miss. It's an invitation to rejoice in the Lord.

But how do we respond to the Lord then? This is the great invitation. But what means do we get in on it? And that's what we turn to in our second movement.

Verse 6-10. See, it's a call to listen. Look with me again in verse 6. O come, let us worship and bow down.

[11 : 10] Let us kneel before the Lord, our maker. See, the author of this psalm here is calling forth another invitation.

Not to a joyful noise, but a call to worship. Bow down and kneel. I hope you're beginning to see the differences in the first one. It's a joyful noise in the first invitation.

But here we have a call to reverence. A call to humility, to bow down and worship. And what is this worship according to this passage then?

We would be helped actually by keep reading. In verse 7 here we see, for, this is the reason for the worship. For he is our God and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.

Notice the imagery of a sheep. How ought sheep to respond to their master and to the shepherd?

[12:19] They are to listen. They are to, in verse 7, to hear his voice and to not harden their hearts. See, this is a call to listen.

So worship is in connection with listening to the voice of the Lord, our maker. The call to worship here in the second movement is an invitation to listen to the Lord's voice.

Not just merely hearing the words, but by doing them. Not to harden hearts, but to listen to the Lord from the center.

That's what the heart is, right? It's the center of your being. The area in which you are to feel and think and desire.

We are to obey the voice of the Lord. It's an invitation you don't want to miss here. And how does this psalm draw us to listen?

[13:24] Well, in verses 8-10 he gives two examples. He takes a look at the history of Israel in the Old Testament. First, beginning with 8 and 9, a history lesson.

In Exodus 17, at Meribah and Massah. See, the Lord in Exodus there just rescued the people of God out of slavery, out of the hand of Egypt.

Through the Red Sea. And how did the people respond? How did Israel respond? Well, at Meribah and Massah they grumbled. They tested the Lord. And they refused to listen to the Lord.

And they refused to listen to the voice of the Lord. It was a persistent hardening of hearts against God's voice. An active rebellion and dissonance.

And they refused to listen to the voice of the Lord. It was a persistent hardening of hearts against God's voice.

[14:35] An active rebellion and disobedience. Doesn't that sound familiar today for you and I?

I mean, don't we refuse to listen to the Lord? Well, what hope do I have in listening to God's voice if my heart is against Him?

What hope do you have in listening to God's voice? What hope do we have in listening to God's voice? See, Israel failed to listen to God.

You and I have failed to listen to God perfectly and obediently. Yet God in His love and kindness sends His Son Jesus. Identifying with His people in the wilderness in Matthew 4.

Faithfully listening to God the Father. Fighting off temptation by obeying and listening to His word.

[15:43] See, Jesus obeys perfectly all that God has said. And He even led Him to die on the cross. And to rise again three days later.

Because in His death and resurrection, Jesus is able to cleanse anybody and anyone who would trust in Him. And actually provide a new heart to listen.

Jesus is the only means in which you are able to get a new heart to listen to the voice of God. And He is the only means in which you are able to listen to God.

See, if you know yourself not to be a Christian or maybe you are exploring Christianity. I just want to invite you here. Maybe for the first time. To repent. To actually stop listening to your own voice.

To stop listening to the voice of the world. And begin to listen to the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ. To offer actually a right relationship with Him.

[16:46] And a new heart that can actually begin to be listened to the voice of the Lord. I would love to talk to you more about that. If that's you, I will be here after the service by the doors in the back.

I would love to chat with you further. What that would look like. For you to follow and listen to the voice of the Lord Jesus. And brothers and sisters in Christ, this is our call today.

To continually listen to our Lord Jesus. To obey today. Did you notice in verse 7, the psalmist is saying today to listen.

He is a speaking God right now every day. There's an active component to listen to our Lord Jesus Christ.

To trust and obey all that Christ has commanded today. Maybe you have trusted and obeyed and listened to Him ten years ago or five years ago or yesterday.

[17 : 52] But this passage is calling forth today. Right now. This moment. To listen. To listen up. Not to delay. Not to wait on, oh, maybe tomorrow. Maybe next week.

Maybe in ten years. No, this is a call as you have breath right now. Today. To listen to Him. So won't you listen to God's voice. And Jesus is actually calling forth and inviting you a fresh reminder to consider.

To listen to Him. See, it's an invitation you don't want to miss. An invitation to rejoice in the Lord by listening to His voice.

This raises a question. What is the consequence of rejecting the Lord? What is the consequence of rejecting this invitation?

[18 : 52] And that's what we're going to look to last. The consequence of rejecting this invitation in verse 11. This is a warning here.

And we know it's a warning because the psalmist concludes, Therefore, as a result of what was before the therefore, the two examples in Israel's history.

There's a mic drop moment here. There's a mic drop moment here. Well, what is the result in rejecting the Lord's voice? A refusal to listen results in God's wrath.

Namely, they shall not enter my rest. There is a consequence for rejecting the Lord.

This has always been the case with God, has it not? There's always been consequences to rebellion. From the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve rejected, there's consequences.

[19 : 57] A removal from the garden for their refusal, their rejection. In Deuteronomy, the laying on of blessings for obedience, for listening to the voice of God.

And consequences for rejecting the voice of God. And that's part of Israel's history in the exile. They refused to listen to the Lord. They rejected God.

And what are the consequences? They shall not enter my rest. For Israel and their history, the rest for them was the promised land.

But in Hebrews 4, there's a reflection on that that rest pointed forward to a better rest. A greater rest. A rest.

A place for God's people to rejoice in God's place under His rule. A rest that you've always wanted.

[21 : 00] So there is consequences. It's a removal from that greater rest if you reject the Lord's invitation. See, there's a greater rest at stake here.

What will help motivate you to listen? What will help motivate you to not miss out on this invitation? Well, it's this warning. What you're going to miss out on is this greater rest if you continually reject this invitation.

There's consequences. Now I want you to consider this morning the consequences of both the rejecting of the Lord and what that results in.

See, it's the Lord's RSVP. Please respond. What will you do? How will you respond? See, there's a great consequence to rejecting the voice of the Lord.

But there is also a great rejoicing to be enjoyed. If you accept. If you say yes to the Lord's RSVP. This invitation you don't want to miss.

[22 : 14] But if you receive it and accept it, there is a great celebration to be had. A great rejoicing in the Lord to be had by listening to his voice.

So how will you respond to the Lord's invitation today? Would you pray with me? Our Father in heaven, we praise you for you are our Lord that invites us to this great rejoicing.

We praise you for you are our God who cares for us. And you provided Jesus as the means in which we can delight in you.

We pray that as we go forth this week that we would listen. That we would come before you. And to pay attention to what you have to say to us.

That we would respond in trust and in obedience. We pray all these things in Jesus name. Amen.