

# From Waywardness to Worship

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[ 0 : 00 ] If you have your Bible with you, you can open it up this morning to Psalm 95. And we've already heard the passage read earlier in the service. And so we're just going to jump right into it.

Psalm 95. This is another psalm in which the author is unknown. And we generally assume that it's a song since the first words are an invitation to sing.

There are two distinct parts to this psalm. And the divide happens kind of in verse 7. There's a couple different ways that we can look at the differences between these two parts.

We could look at the kind of words. Verses 1 to 7. The feeling of it is celebration. The call is to worship. And the focus is the worthiness of God.

The second part, verse 7 to 11, is a hard shift. Suddenly the focus is lamentation.

[ 1 : 09 ] The call is to repent. To soften our hearts. And the focus, the main subject, is the waywardness of the people. In this case, the Israelites.

So the first part tells us where we should be. Worshiping the Lord. Come, let us worship the Lord. The second part tells us where we shouldn't be. Don't ignore God. Soften your heart. Or to put it another way.

That second part convicts us where we are sometimes. The attitude that we have. And the first part tells us where we need to be instead.

We need to move away from waywardness to worship. Away from unbelief to faith in the Lord. Away from ignoring Him to listening to Him.

[ 2 : 10 ] Away from a hard heart. And to a soft, joyful heart of worship towards Him. And so I think if I was to distill it down to one main point.

What's the big idea in this psalm? The psalmist, I think, is urging us. He's saying, give your ear. Your listening ear.

And your heart. And your voice. And your knee. Your bended knee. To the Lord. Who is worthy.

So we're going to unpack that. And we're going to see that here in this psalm. And we're going to do it a little unusual. We're going to start with the second half. And then come back and look at the first half. So we're going to start in verse 7.

And right at the beginning of that second part. Today, if only, you would hear His voice. These are words of lament.

[ 3 : 12 ] It's as if the psalmist is looking out at the people around him. And what does he see? He sees people who are not listening to God. He sees people who are ignoring God.

They're minimizing. They're shutting out His words. We don't want to hear that stuff anymore. Don't tell us about the Lord. And what He wants from us.

And then in verse 8. The author writes into the song. The very words that God's voice is saying. And it starts with this imperative.

This command. Do not harden your hearts. So this is the problem with the people in the day of this song. They are hardening their hearts towards God.

They are stubbornly set against Him. They're not letting His words in. Their hearts are hard with unbelief.

[ 4 : 15 ] Skepticism. A critical spirit towards God. Rather than faith. And trust. And humility.

So God tells them what they're like. He says, Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah. As you did that day at Massa. In the wilderness.

Where your ancestors tested me. They tried me. They tried me. Though they had seen what I did. For 40 years.

I was angry. With that generation. I said. They are a people whose hearts go astray. And they have not known. My ways. So the problem with the people.

In the days of this song. Is. That they are in their hearts. Going astray. From God. They're turning away from Him. Just like the Israelites did.

[ 5 : 12 ] Long ago. In the days of the Exodus. And the wilderness wanderings. And. To fully appreciate this. We kind of have to go back. And we have to look at those. Days. What happened at Meribah.

And Massa. With the Israelites there. In the wilderness. So we're going to flip back. To Exodus chapter 17. And here in Exodus chapter 17.

The Israelites had just been saved. From that oppressive slavery. In Egypt. God set them free. He showed them. His awesome power.

He poured plague. After plague. On the Egyptians. Until finally. The Pharaoh of Egypt. Let the whole. Israelite people. Walk out. And the Israelites.

Journeyed through the wilderness. But then Pharaoh. Changed his mind. And he started pursuing them. With his chariot army. Hoping to get them back. And most of you know.

[ 6 : 10 ] The great deliverance. That God gave. When he opened a way. Through the Red Sea. Wall of water. On the right. And the left. The Israelites passed through. On dry ground. And then when the Egyptian army.

Went in. God caused the sea. To close up. Over top of them. And they were all drowned. This is what the Israelites. Have just experienced. Here in Exodus chapter 17.

It was like literally. Two weeks ago. But even though. They witnessed personally. First hand. God's miraculous power. His saving love. Within a few days.

They were grumbling. And complaining. Against God. And against Moses. His prophet. And the things that they were saying. About God. Were awful.

Oh. It would have been better. If God had just killed us. Back in Egypt. There we sat around. Pots of meat. Ate all the food we wanted.

[ 7 : 08 ] But you. Moses. Have brought us out. Into this desert. To starve this entire assembly. To death. Instead of simply praying.

And asking God. For the things that they needed. They grumbled. They complained. They insulted God. Exodus 17 verse 3.

Is another example of this. The people were thirsty. For water. At a particular. Point in their journey. Did they ask God.

For water. No. Instead they grumbled. Against Moses. They said. Why did you bring us up. Out of Egypt. To make us. And our children. And our livestock. Die of thirst.

First. The next verse. Tells us. That they were almost ready. To kill Moses. And yet God was merciful. He did another.

[ 8 : 03 ] Miracle. He opened. The rock. And water came flowing out. Enough to. Give the entire assembly. Water to drink.

And that was on top of the manna. Which he was already sending. Every day. It was appearing on the ground. Bread. To eat. Out of nowhere.

In verse 7. It says. That Moses called the place. Massa. And Meribah. Because the Israelites quarreled.

And because they tested the Lord. Saying. Is the Lord among us. Or not. Massa.

In Hebrew. Means testing. Meribah. Means quarreling. And this is just a little sample. Of the attitude. That the Israelites had. Towards God.

[ 8 : 56 ] And Moses. During the wilderness wanderings. You really do have to go back. And read through the whole story. Right from. You know. Exodus. Numbers. Deuteronomy. To get a sense of how this went.

Their attitude was appalling. I mean. Think of this. How could you walk through the Red Sea. A wall of water on your right. And your left. And then within days.

Doubt whether God really cares. About you. And loves you. Back in Egypt. They suffered terribly.

They were beat mercilessly. They were treated like garbage. The Egyptians. Killed their babies.

They worked them like dogs.

And after watching God. Pour plague. After plague. On Egypt. Leading them out. Setting them free. Here they are.

[ 9 : 58 ] So ungrateful. They accuse God. They accuse God. Of bringing them out into the wilderness. Just to kill them. As if he was some kind of.

Sick. Malicious tyrant. Who just gets kicks. Out of making people suffer. God gave them commands. At Mount Sinai.

Some of you know the story. Of the Ten Commandments. God spoke out of the fire. On the mountain. To the whole nation. His ten words. And what did the Israelites do? They disobeyed them.

He told them. You shall have no other gods. Before me. You shall not make for yourself. Any graven images. Of things above. Things.

Down on earth. You shall not bow down. To those kinds of things. And worship them. And what did they do? Within days. They built a golden calf. And they started bowing down.

[10:57] And worshiping it. While Moses was. Up on the mountain. Meeting with God. And God was so patient. He was so merciful to them.

At the end of all that. He brought them up. Out of the desert. To the edge of the promised land. He said. It's time to go in. Go. I'll be with you. I'll give you success.

I will help you. And they refused. To go in. The whole lot of them. Except Joshua and Caleb. Grumbled. And complained. And wailed. If only we had died in Egypt.

Or in this wilderness. Why is the Lord bringing us. To this land. Only to let us fall by the sword. Our wives and our children. Will be taken as plunder.

Wouldn't it be better. For us to go back to Egypt. Yeah. Let's choose a leader. And go back. They had no faith in God. They had no appreciation.

[11:55] Of his kindness. His goodness. And so God finally said. Enough is enough. With that generation.

And he. Sent them to wander in the wilderness. For 40 years. Until everyone in that generation. Except Joshua and Caleb. Died. They would not be allowed.

To enter the promised land. And find the rest. From their journey. Through the wilderness. So now. Here in Psalm 95.

God is saying. To the people. Of a future generation. Do not harden your hearts. As you did at Meribah.

As you did that day. At Massa. In the wilderness. Where your ancestors. Tested me. They tried me. Though they had seen. What I did. For 40 years.

[12:50] I was angry. With that generation. I said. They are a people. Whose hearts. Go astray. And they have not known. My ways. So I declared on oath.

In my anger. They shall never. Enter my rest. God is calling out. To the people. Of this Psalms day. Don't be.

Like they were. Back then. Don't harden your heart. Towards me. Don't test me. Don't try me. Like they did. And there is a warning.

Baked into all of this. As much as we. Don't like. Those kinds of things. God is saying. You know. How I responded to them. When they were persistent. In their stubborn.

Disobedient. Unbelief. I was angry with them. I punished them. For 40 years. In the desert. I saw to it. That they never got. That rest.

[13:48] That they longed for. A place to settle. And call home. In the good land. That I had for them. So. Don't be like them. Do not be hard. In your heart.

Against me. To me. Do not test me. Like they did. Don't try my patience. Like they did. Or you will see. My anger aroused. That's the warning.

That God is giving here. And so this is what we hear. The psalmist saying. In this part. Of the psalm. Give your ear. Your listening ear.

And your heart. To the Lord. Listen to his voice. With a soft heart. And these words are not just for the Israelites. But for all of us.

Let me ask you. Are you listening. To God's voice. I'm not talking about. Your own inner impressions.

[14:50] Of what God might be. Saying to you. I mean the things. That we know for sure. That God has said. To all of us. Are you listening.

To his voice. His words. As you read. This book. Are you reading it. To hear. His voice. His voice. And with what you're hearing.

Are you really listening to him. Is your heart soft. Towards what God is saying. In these pages. Are you willing.

To be corrected. Even rebuked. By the Lord. In these pages. Are you willing. To change. Are you willing.

To ask. God. For help. To do some of those. Hard things. That you know. He has called us. To do in here. I invite you.

[15:49] To examine yourself. What's your attitude. Towards God. These days. How do you see him.

Is your attitude. Like the Israelites. Are you critical. Towards him. Critical of his ways. Critical of his intentions. Do you have unbelief. Doubt. Do you suspect. That he doesn't really love you. Or care about you. Even though. Time and time again.

He has shown that he does. Is your heart. Soft. And devoted. To the Lord. To Jesus. Or is it going astray.

[16:50] Is it mostly. Preoccupied. With. Other things. Stuff of earth. Today.

If only. You would hear. His voice. Do not harden. Your hearts. Like the Israelites. Did. If we fast forward. To the New Testament.

To the days. After Jesus. Had already come. And gone. The author of Hebrews. Has much to say. About this. Very passage. And I'm not going to spend. Too much time here. But in Hebrews. Chapter 3. The author of Hebrews. Actually uses. Psalm 95. The second part. To. Exhort.

To warn. To encourage. The people that he's writing. The letter to. I'll just read. A snippet of it. In verse 7. So as the Holy Spirit. Says. Today.

[17:48] If you hear his voice. Do not harden your hearts. As you did. In the rebellion. During the time of testing. In the wilderness. He quotes the whole. Section. From Psalm 95. And then.

This is what he has to say. At the end of it. Based on that. See to it. Brothers and sisters. That none of you.

Has a sinful. Unbelieving heart. That turns away. From the living God. But encourage. One another. Daily. As long as it is called.

Today. So that none of you. May be hardened. By sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share. In Christ. If indeed. We hold.

Our original conviction. Firmly. To the very end. God. And the author. Hebrews. Goes on. He has way more. To say about that. But. The point.

[18:43] Here. Is that. We know. Beyond the shadow. Of a doubt. That these words. In Psalm 95. Spoken to Israel. They're for us. Today. As well. God.

Is the same thing. To say to us. Today. Examine your heart. Carefully. Don't let it be. A sinful. Unbelieving heart. That turns away.

From the living God. Verse 14. We've come to share. In Christ. If indeed. We hold. Our original conviction.

About him. Firmly. To the very end. Don't let there be. A sinful. Unbelieving heart. In you. That turns away. From Jesus. The Christ. And that conviction.

That you have come to. Your faith. In him. Maybe you're here. And you realize. My heart. Is hard.

[19:38] I am. Very. Much. Wrestling. With doubt. And if that's you. I want to encourage you. Repent. Turn to God.

Humble yourself. Before him. Before Jesus. Turn back to him. If you hear his voice. Calling you. Today. Turn to him.

Call out to him. Soften to him. Listen to him. And the author of Hebrews. Goes on. He says. If you see someone else.

In our midst. Who has a sinful. And unbelieving heart. That turns away from the living God. What should you do? He says.

Encourage. One another. So that none of you. May be hardened. By sins. Deceitfulness. Every one of us.

[20:38] Is vulnerable. To temptation. To go down the path. Towards sin. We all hear that. That sin. Voice. Whispering.

In here. Calling us. To do this. To do that. To go over here. Here. But what sin whispers. Is deceitful. It lies.

To us. And if we embrace those lies. We can. Become hard. In here. But the encouragement. Of a brother. Or a sister. In the Lord.

Can. Break. Through. That hardness. And enable us. To see. What we've fallen into. Do. So if it's not. Your heart. That's hard. Or gone astray.

Is there somebody. That you know. A believer. Who needs a loving. Gracious. Gentle. Yet firm. Word of encouragement.

[ 21 : 36 ] This is the kind of stuff. That we as Christians. Are called. To do. Today. By God. For each other. So that's the. The second part.

Of this psalm. His main point. Give your. Ear. Your. Listening ear. To the Lord. And your heart. To the Lord.

And it's both. Together. Both together. Let's come to the first part. Of this psalm now. Psalm 95. Verse. One.

We've seen where we shouldn't be. We've seen where Israel was. But now. What are they being called to? Where should they be? Come.

Let us sing for joy. To the Lord. Let us shout aloud. To the rock. Of our salvation. Let us come before him. With thanksgiving. And extol him.

[ 22 : 34 ] With music. And song. This is where we should be. The psalmist invites us. He calls us. To worship. The Lord. He tells us to sing.

Joyfully. To him. To give thanks. To extol him. With music. And song. To extol.

I had to look that up in the dictionary. Just to make sure. It means. To raise up. To lift high.

Metaphorically. Speaking. In this context. It means to praise God highly.

Enthusiastically. And we're to do that with music. With song. Which means that the substance of the music.

And the songs that we sing. Should lift God high. Should declare how wonderful. How glorious he is. Should give him that high praise.

[ 23 : 35 ] And then. Verses three to five. Are the reasons why. We should praise God like this. With song and music. And shouts of thanksgiving. He says.

I'll just read it again. Let us come before him. With the thanksgiving. And extol him. With music and song. For the Lord. Is the great God. The great king.

Above all gods. So we should worship God. In this way. Music. Song. Thanksgiving. Because look at who he is. He's the great God.

The great king. Above all gods. The Lord is. The supreme. Power. The greatest being. He rules. As king over all.

And especially. Over all the. Gods. Of the nations. And religions. Of our world. None of them. Can compare to him. Let's just have one quick example.

[ 24 : 33 ] Think back to how. The gods of Egypt. Fared against the Lord. When the Israelites. Were slaves there. God sent plague.

After plague. On the Egyptians. And utterly decimated. Their land. Showing that their religion. Was worthless. One of my favorite plagues.

That God sent on Egypt. Was three days. Of pitch black darkness. Over the whole. Land of Egypt. Except. The region of Goshen.

Where the. His people lived. There it was day. Just like. It usually is. During the daytime. And. And why do I like that? Because the most powerful. God.

Of Egypt. Was Ra. The God of the sun. It's as if. The Lord was saying. No.

[ 25 : 29 ] The sun listens. To me. I command the sun. To shine. Here. Or there. Or not. God. God is supreme. He reigns as king.

Above all the. So called gods. Of the nations. And religions. And the Bible is full of examples like this. I could come up with a whole bunch more.

But you get the point. He is worthy of our worship. Because. He is the great God. He is the king above all gods. He is the almighty. So he is worthy of our songs.

Our exalting music. And there's more. Verse 4. In his hand. Are the depths. Of the earth.

And the mountain peaks. Belong to him. The sea is his. For he made it. And his hands formed. The dry land. So God is worthy of our worship.

[ 26 : 28 ] Also. Another reason. Because he made the earth. Earth. In its various. Parts. He is worthy of our worship. Because these things on earth.

That to us. Compared to us. They are great. They are deep. They are high. Compared to him. They are nothing. He made that. That is just the work of his hands. And I love this.

In verse 4. I mean. Have you. How many of you have ever been to the ocean? Okay. If you haven't been to the ocean. Imagine you're there at the ocean. How much water.

Can you scoop up. Into your two hands. In God's hands. It says. Are the depths. Of the earth. It's poetic. But the point is. God could hold. All of the water. Of the deepest oceans. In his hands. If he wanted to. That's how great he is.

[ 27 : 26 ] In comparison to this. Earth. That he has made. Or what about the mountains? I love driving. Out west. And going through the Rockies. Those Rockies.

They're so majestic. Massive. You could climb all day. And still not get to the top. Of the tallest peaks. Those massive mountains.

Are gods. The mountain peaks. Belong to him. They're his. They're part of the. Dry land. That God formed long ago.

So this massive. Beautiful earth. With its depths. With its heights. Is nothing. Compared to the God. Who made it. Everest. Is like a little.

Bump in the sand. That he. Patted down. And formed. With his. Hands in his sandbox. The oceans. Are like a scoop of water. That he. Dumped down. Into their places.

[ 28 : 25 ] The continents. They're like. Those little mounds. That he shaped. With his hands. On the beach. The seas. The little puddles. That he's. Poured in. Beside them.

This earth. And all its beauty. It still. Puts awe. In the hearts. Of all people. Believer or not. God. God is worthy.

Of our worship. Because he made it. Compared to it. He is. Far greater. And all of it. Belongs to him. It's his. And so.

Again. The psalmist. Calls us to worship. In verse six. He says. Come. Let us. Bow down. In worship. Let us. Kneel. Before the Lord.

Our maker. So not just the singing. And the music. Is he worthy of. But full out. Worship. He's so great. So worthy. That it's good. It's right.

[ 29 : 21 ] For us. To bow down. On our faces. On the ground. Before him. To kneel. Before him. And he just goes on. There's more reasons.

We don't have time for that. In verse seven. How he is our. Good and caring shepherd. Just at the end. Of this verse. Let us kneel. Before the Lord. Our maker.

Just think about that. Not only did he make the mountains. And do they belong to him. But you. He made you. You belong to him.

So what's the psalmist. Telling us through all this. Give your ear. Your listening ear. And your heart. And your voice. Your singing voice. Your praising voice. And your knee. Your bended knee. Your reverence. To the Lord.

[ 30 : 23 ] Because he is worthy. Of it. Let's talk about singing. In the last minute or two here.

Because God is worthy. Of our worship. He wants us. To sing. To him. Not ritualistically. But from our hearts.

Says sing for joy. To the Lord. Joy is not something. You just fake. It comes from down in here. In the heart. Songs. Are special.

Music. Has a way of conveying. More than just. Words. And thoughts. And ideas. It also. Conveys. Conveys. Feelings. And emotions.

God wants us to use songs. Because he wants us. To express. How we feel. About his glory.

[ 31 : 23 ] His goodness. His love. His gifts. Songs from. Our hearts. To his.

And this isn't just an Old Testament. Temple worship thing. We might be tempted to. Oh well. That's the Old Testament. There we got to sing to the Lord. But we're in the New Testament. We have a new covenant.

Well. Singing. Is a new covenant. Church of Jesus Christ. Thing as well. We could go to a few passages. But here's one real real quick. Let the word of Christ. Richly dwell within you.

Colossians 3.16. With all wisdom teaching. And admonishing one another. And with psalms and hymns. And spiritual songs. Singing.

With thankfulness. In your hearts. To God. We are to be a singing people. A gathered. Worshiping people.

[ 32 : 22 ] Who sing songs of all kinds. Psalms. Hymns. Spiritual songs. From our hearts. To the Lord. To Jesus. Not because it's tradition. Not because it's just fun.

Or it feels good. But because he is worthy. Of our worship. Of our songs. So that's why we gather. Like this every Sunday.

This is what it's all about. This is one of the main purposes. Of our gathering. It's to worship the Lord. So this is what the psalmist. Is saying to us. Again.

Give your ear. Your listening ear. And your heart. To the Lord. And along with that. Give your voice. Your singing. Your praising voice.

And finally give your knee. Your bended knee. Also. To the Lord. He is worthy. He's so worthy of our worship. That yes. Even bowing down on the ground.

[ 33 : 22 ] Is fitting. Is right. It's quite appropriate. We don't do this enough. We don't have time to talk about.

Whether we should be doing this in church. But at the least. Let's practice. The posture. Of reverence. In every way that we can.

In the way that we talk about God. To others. Church. His things. In our private moments. Our prayers.

Let's teach our children. Respect. For the Lord. Maybe it's. Kneeling with them. At their bedsides. There's a meaning to that.

It's because. He is worthy. He is God. Our bodies have language too. So. Let's use them. To show reverence to God. I saw one of you.

[ 34 : 20 ] Raise hands during worship. That's okay. That's. It's not just a Pentecostal thing. God has given us. Our whole body.

To use. In worship to him. And it's right. It. It fits. Who he is. He's worthy. Of your ear. He's worthy. Of your heart. He's worthy. Of your voice. He's worthy.

Of your bended knee. Let's pray. Father in heaven. And I pray. And ask that you would.

Do a miracle. In each of our hearts. This morning. That these words. Wouldn't just sit. On the surface. But that they would go. Deep down. Inside. I pray that you would.

Make us soft. Towards you. And that you would. Fill us with that joy. That comes from seeing. And knowing you. That we would. Not need to.

[ 35 : 18 ] Manufacture. Any praise. Or worship. But that it would just. Flow out of us. Because we see you. And we know you. Show yourself. To us. In those ways again.

We give ourselves to you. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.