PSALM 100: "A PSALM FOR GIVING THANKS"

Blake Harris, 11/25/18

Welcome: Our text this morning is the 100th Psalm. As you turn there, I want to say, *welcome to you all*, this morning. I want to encourage you that whether your week was filled with feasting, family, and festivity, or whether it was a lonely or tense week, or somewhere in between, you are welcome here – for all who know Jesus Christ, he welcomes you to a feast at the end of our service as we celebrate the Lord's Supper. It is a spiritual feast instituted by Christ, and it is a family feast, open to all who have looked to him by faith.

Now read along with me in Psalm 100 – this is God's living and active Word. [Read Psalm 100]

Introduction: I chose this Psalm because I thought it would be a good Thanksgiving Psalm – the original heading states that it is "A Psalm for Giving Thanks" – perfect for Thanksgiving, right? But it surprised me as I explored it – I found so much more than I expected.

The word translated, "Giving Thanks" can mean two things – (1) it can mean the sacrifice given for a thank offering (one of the many offerings that Israelites would bring to the temple), or (2) it can mean the inner heart attitude that leads to and accompanies such a sacrifice.[1] The attitude of the heart is what God truly delights in – a heart sensitive to sin and in awe of God's goodness. I call this "Heart and Life Worship," and this morning, we will see that:

God calls us to worship him with our hearts and lives, empowered by his Spirit, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, as a result of the Father's character. [In other words, who God is drives us to worship – to "give thanks" – with all we have and all we are.]

[1] Robert Davidson, *The Vitality of Worship: A Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 326.

I. Make a joyful noise to the LORD

Psalm 100 actually falls at the end of the Kingship Psalms (93, 95-99) – Psalms that speak of God's reign as King over all creation.[2] The first line can be translated "shout for joy to the LORD."
This echoes the shouts given in homage to the Kings of Israel – much like the one raised when King Solomon was anointed King in I Kings 1: "Then they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, 'Long live King Solomon!' And all the people went up after him, playing on pipes, and rejoicing with great joy, so that the earth was split by their noise.'" This must have been quite a shout!

Psalm 100 brings the Kingship Psalms to a resounding conclusion with its description of heart and life worship. And it begins in verse 1:

A. True Worship is Missional

Notice who the call to worship goes out to – "ALL THE EARTH."
How can "all the earth" make a joyful noise to the LORD?
Well, a joyful noise can only come from a joyful heart. A joyful heart comes from God, who removes the gloomy heart of stone and gives us a new heart of flesh that is able, by the Spirit, to experience real joy. This new heart is now able to be captivated by the power and goodness of the true King. If you don't know the true King, you will never know joy.

So how can all the earth shout for joy? Only if a multitude from every nation, from every tribe and people and language bows to this true King.

This has been God's design all along – consider Abraham in Genesis 12 when God said, "I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing…in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

From the beginning, God's plan of redemption was global in scope.

[2] ESV Study Bible note, p. 1056.

[I got a taste of this last weekend in Albany, GA – our church sent a disaster relief team to help clean up downed trees from Hurricane Michael wind damage. We stayed in the church building of Northgate PCA – in SS rooms, the nursery, anywhere. The second night, there was an Indian worship service and potluck dinner at the church. With thick Indian accents, they invited us to the service – the foreigners inviting the natives to "Make a joyful noise, all the earth." – let me tell you, their curry is spicy!]

B. True worship involves all of life (2a)

The Psalmist calls us to "Serve the LORD with gladness" and "come into his presence with singing."
Right away this shocks our sinful senses: "Serve the LORD"? – My sinful heart says, "O man, not again – all God does is ask us to serve him. And 'with gladness'? How is that possible?"
Maybe if you're like me, your service to God feels more like drudgery than delight.

Hold on. The word "serve" is used in Deuteronomy to mean more than things we do on Sunday – singing, Sunday School, sermons. This word means loving God and keeping his commandments – a commitment to the LORD that affects every moment of your life.[3]

Have you ever noticed that when you don't know and experience the goodness of God on Monday through Saturday, when you sing about it on Sunday, it feels empty?
Israel was caught in this same pattern in Isaiah 1 – they had outward shows of worship, but their lives between Sabbaths did not reflect unreserved commitment to him.

[READ Isaiah 1:12-15] "When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? Bring no more vain offerings…I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly…your hands are full of blood."

[3] Davidson, *The Vitality of Worship*, p. 327.

Is there blood on your hands this morning? Do your life and the words you are singing match up?

What does it look like to serve the LORD with gladness today?
[Dr. Park – Greek 1 – "This is where you worship."]

Paul tells us in Romans 12, "I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."
This call to serve the LORD encompasses all of life – every moment of each day is to be worship – and our very selves the sacrifice.
To serve the LORD with gladness extends to brushing your teeth, doing your math homework, savoring a good meal, exercising – every mundane moment of life is included in this call to worship.

[One practical way to practice this is to be prayerful – when I would study Greek grammar in seminary, I would pray, "God, let this time of study be worship." As I change this diaper, as I balance this spreadsheet, as I make this sandwich, let this be an act of worship.]

One commentator said, there is "no gap between worship and work."[4]

To serve the LORD with gladness is to, "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ" (Col 3:23-24).

C. True Worship knows who God is (3a)

Verse 3 cuts to the heart of why we don't worship.

"Know that the LORD, he is God."

[4] Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150* (Tyndale), p. 356.

How does this Psalm identify God? “The LORD” in all caps. Whenever you see this, it means Yahweh, the covenant-making, covenant-keeping God of Israel.

Jeremiah 31:34 tells of the new covenant that God makes with Israel – “And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest…” How? Because he would write his law on their hearts.

All who are brought into this new covenant by grace through faith will know God. So why say, “Know that the LORD, he is God”?

Because there is a difference between knowing God and knowing that he *is* God. We can know God through salvation, but in daily living not acknowledge him as God.

Psalm 46:10, often quoted on coffee mugs on Instagram, says, “Be still and know that I am God.” This verse is not as tame as we make it.

In Psalm 46, God speaks of himself as “our refuge and strength – a very present help in trouble.” Later, the Psalmist says of God, “Come behold the works of the LORD, how he has brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire.” And into this tumult, God’s voice rings out, “‘Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!’”

There are two messages here:

1) A WARNING for the unbelieving nations – “all the earth – lay down your weapons, it’s no use, I am God, I will be exalted. There are some here this morning who need to hear this message. In rebellion against God, you want to be your own god. Lay down your arms, it’s no use. Know that the LORD, he is God.

2) A REBUKE for the restless believer – "stop worrying about your life. You are not God. Trust me. I am in control of your life, and I am good." I would estimate that all of us need to hear that rebuke this morning to some degree. To hear Jesus say to the storm in our soul, "Peace! Be still."[5]
In what area of your life do you need this loving rebuke this morning? Be still, know that the LORD, he is God.

Not only does true worship know who God is, but…

D. True Worship Knows who we are (3b)

"It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."

"Made" here does not primarily mean "created" – the context is talking about God's chosen people – how he *made* them to be a people set apart to be his treasured possession (Deut. 7:6).

Peter calls this people, "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession" (I Peter 2:9-10).
This makes the call to "Serve him with gladness" make sense – if we belong to him, the only natural response is to **serve** him. And if we remember HOW we got to be his – "You are not your own; you were bought at a price" (I Cor 6:19-20), then our service can be glad.

The ownership God has on us is not as a taskmaster, but as a lover, much in the sense of the words of the bride in Song of Solomon: "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine" (6:3). It is a delightful, freeing ownership.

[5] Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (42-90)*, p. 98. – the warning and the rebuke came from Ross.

In this way, "the more his, the more free," says Tim Keller in his daily devotional in the Psalms.[6] Knowing that we have been bought at great price – the precious blood of Christ – makes everyday obedience move from drudgery to delight.[7]

Our self-giving is only in response to Jesus' self-giving.

What picture does the Psalmist give to illustrate what it means for us to be God's people?
"we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."

In a way, this is not flattering. Sheep are not smart animals. In fact, they are plain dumb. But that's not all we can see.

Let's explore this picture more deeply. Two questions will help us.

1) *What do sheep do in relation to a good, loving shepherd?* TRUST, FOLLOW, JOYFULLY SUBMIT TO HIS LEAD

2) *What does a good, loving shepherd do for the sheep?*
   He strengthens the weak, heals the sick, binds up the injured, brings back the strays, seeks after the lost, protects them from wild beasts, and **he feeds them** (Ezekiel 34:3-5).

   That is what the picture in Psalm 100 focuses on – feeding – the PASTURE. And we know that the Shepherd of this pasture is also a KING, who knows how to feed his sheep – how to lead them to good, rich, abundant pasture, even in the presence of enemies.

   "The LORD is my Shepherd; I lack nothing!"
   He makes his sheep lie down in green pastures.

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[6] Timothy Keller, with Kathy Keller, *The Songs of Jesus: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms* (New York: Viking, 2015) p. 247.
[7] Keller, p. 247. See Rev 5:9

This Shepherd-King has a special, indescribably green pasture that only he can grant access to. **What is this pasture?** Certainly daily bread, and even turkey,… but this Shepherd is so good and so loving that he leads us to much more…

He says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:10-11).

What is the pasture? He says, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst" (John 6:35).

THE SHEPHERD FEEDS US WITH HIMSELF. If that sounds painful, it's because it was.

You say, "Blake, I believe you – but I still don't experience the joy that this Psalm speaks of."

Remember the furry animal I told you about? That was a sheep trying to be a shepherd.

When we try to be our own shepherd, we miss the bounty that our Shepherd-King sets before us,

But the breathtaking news is that…

E. True worship draws near to God with joy (4)

We are called to enter into his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. "Gates" and "courts" both refer to the temple – drawing near to God.

Psalm 24 asks "Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? …He who has clean hands and a pure heart…" The problem is that my hands are full of blood – how can we draw near to him?

Hebrews 9:11-15 – Christ "entered once for all into the holy places…by means of his own blood…" So now, "the blood of Christ…" will "purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

What is our service to God? Our lives as a living sacrifice. What is the trouble with a living sacrifice? It tends to crawl off the altar.[8] We crawl off because we want to be our own shepherds. Why stay on the altar?

Because "the LORD is good" – even in a deeply fallen, broken, painful world.

I read about a conversation between a girl and a beaver:

Beaver: "Aslan is a lion- the Lion, the great Lion."

"Ooh" said Susan. "I'd thought he was a man. Is he - quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion"...

"Safe?" said Mr Beaver ..."Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."[9]

We stay on the altar because:

"Surely goodness and steadfast love will follow me all the days of my life" (Psalm 23:6).

In the short view, it can be hard to see God's goodness, but I will leave you with a picture of the long view for sheep of his pasture:

[Read Rev 7:15-17]

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[8] Harry Reeder, sermon at Briarwood PCA

[9] C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe.*

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