

A SHOUT OF PRAISE

Psalm 100

Do you internalize Scripture? Certainly, we have great privilege to have the Word of God in our own language, and we are reminded by the psalmist in Psalm 119 that we can hide it in our heart so that we might not sin against God. In the New Testament, we have many examples put before us of those who not only knew about the Word but actually knew what the Scripture taught. They loved the Word, and they applied it to their heart.

One of the most popular psalms in the Old Testament is Psalm 100. It is a rich set of verses packed with great encouragement and help. Let's break it down and consider some of the great truths this chapter affords.

Ps 100:1 – [A Psalm of Praise] Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

² Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

³ Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

⁴ Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

⁵ For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

The first thing we should note about this psalm is that it is packed with spiritual instruction. The superscription says, "*a Psalm of Praise.*" The word "*praise*" means "thanksgiving," and it sets the course for the psalm's overall direction. In other words, whatever comes after the superscript is designed to help us give thankful praise to God.

That instruction is provided in the psalm's seven commands (imperatives).

1. In verse 1 we see "*make a joyful noise.*" That literally means, "shout the praise of God!"
2. In verse 2, the psalmist says, "*serve the Lord*" or "make yourself a servant." It is an emphasis upon voluntary submission.
3. Also in verse 2, we see the word "*come.*" It is an invitation to enter into God's presence with a song of worship in our heart.
4. Verse 3 commands us to "know" or to discern or find out by experience that God is indeed God. He alone is worthy of our praise.
5. The psalmist uses the word "enter" in verse 4, which is the same Hebrew word for "come in verse 2. The word "gates" refer to God's dwelling, and the word "courts" make reference to the place of His sovereign rule. It is an invitation for God's people to come to God with thanksgiving and praise.
6. Verse 4 also tells us to "be thankful" or "laud the Lord with praise and confession."
7. We are then commanded to "bless" or "kneel" in adoration on account of His good, just, and righteous reputation.

In the end, all of the commands and imperatives of this psalm define what is involved in praise. Praise is active instead of meditative and slow. It shouts (v1), sings (Ps 146:2), it dances (Ps 149:3), and it plays music (Ps 150:3). It is never melancholy, gloomy, or moody. Instead, praise *shouts, serves, kneels down, comes in, finds out by experience, lauds with confession, and bows down in adoration.* May our own praise ever be the same.

A second thing we should notice is that this psalm displays God's grace. In verse 1 we see "*all ye lands.*" The implication is that God invites all men to worship Him because all men are His creation. Worship is not exclusive for Israel alone, but the call for worship goes out to all heathen nations as well. Unfortunately, that call is rejected as we see in Psalm 2 that the heathen rage, imagine vain things, and take council against the Lord. Romans 1 tells us that the heathen reject God in order to worship their own evil, perverted desires. Yet here, the psalmist makes the plea for all to find their heart's longing and satisfaction in the true Creator and Sovereign. It is an invitation that shows the depth of God's grace, mercy, and His willingness to forgive.

A final observation to notice is that praise involves proper teaching about God. As we noted above, verse 3 begins with the invitation is to "find out by experience that God is indeed God." In layman's terms, verse 3 shouts, "Pay attention! Commit to memory! Be convinced of this!" We could illustrate it in the manner of how we approach a test. Some

“cram” in order to pass, but rarely (if ever learn). Others are so interested in the subject that they take personal time to learn the intricacies of it. The psalmist calls for worship that uses intimate knowledge of God, not a passing thought.

He continues, “*know that the Lord, He is God.*” Yahweh is God. Not Mohammed. Not Buddah. Not Mary. No one is able to compete with the eternal God who has no beginning or end. Nothing exists apart from the independent, sovereign Lord of all.

“*It is He that hath made us,*” and since He is the creator, He has sole right to do whatever He pleases. He could allow us to be miserable if He so wills. Sometimes we see that in terms of drought, famine, and sickness, but even in those cases, Scripture affirms that He is doing it for our good and His glory. (Romans 8:28 is a tremendous reminder of that truth.) Because He is our creator, He could give us every desire we have; however, Ecclesiastes shows us that even if He so willed, we would still be empty and unsatisfied. In truth, the Bible tells us that God always does what is best for us. Jerry Bridges, in his book *Trusting God Even When Life Hurts*, reminds us that “In His wisdom, God knows what is best for us. In His love, God wills what is best for us. In His sovereignty, God brings about what is best for us.” God always brings about our good for His glory.

Verse 3 also brings out the aspect of relationship: “*we are His people....*” God is not an evil dictator who hides His will from us and yet still expects us to find it. He does not take pleasure in calling us to live a holy lifestyle all-the-while knowing that since we do not know how to be holy we will make shipwreck of lives through sin. No, God wants us to know Him. God wants us to serve Him. God wants us to bless, praise, adore, honor and worship Him. All because, “we are His people.” We could put it this way: Because God desires a relationship with us, He has given us His eternal, infallible Word so that we can know Him. He has given us the Bible so that we can know God’s mercy, goodness, and truth.

The psalmist then gives us a metaphor: “*We are the sheep of His pasture.*” Sheep are completely dependent. They cannot survive by themselves and, therefore, they need a shepherd to provide food, water, shelter, and safety. In short, the shepherd provides everything necessary for his sheep to be satisfied. Sometimes, the shepherd provides correction, but all of the time, he shows his sheep love by guarding them and defending them. If necessary, a shepherd is even willing to give his life for his sheep. The metaphor of sheep in verse 3 sees God as our Great Shepherd who does all that is necessary to care for us. Psalm 23 speaks of our Great Shepherd providing and protecting us. Isaiah 53 speaks of a suffering servant who endured the crushing blows of God to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows. Isaiah 53:5 say that with His stripes, we are healed. When we come to the New Testament, all four Gospel accounts show us Christ who became sin for us in order to make us right with God. Christ is our Great Shepherd who did all that was necessary to protect and provide for His sheep.

In verse 4, we see that because God is our Shepherd who has a relationship with us, we can come into His presence and worship Him. We enter with praise and confession (*thanksgiving*). We enter His courts with songs of praise, and we bless His name with adoration for all He is and has done.

In the end, Psalm 100 concludes with these words: *for the Lord is good (valuable); His loving, faithful loyalty is eternal, and His truth endures to all generations.* It is not limited to space, time, region, class, era, nor ethnicity. All men, from every corner of the earth, in every generation, has the privileged opportunity to know the only good, loving, sovereign God. May we take the time to internalize God’s Word so that we come before Him with a heart full of worship ready to shout with praise.