

“Thankful Praise” Psalm 100

Baxter T. Exum (#951)
Four Lakes Church of Christ
Madison, Wisconsin
December 2, 2007



Introduction:

We are living in a very prosperous nation, and even with the recent hiccups in the economy, some of us may be tempted to forget that all of these blessings have come from God. Sometimes we need to slow down and think very carefully about the prosperity we see around us. Most of you know that a new Super Target opened up this past summer, just over the hill from our house, and we have truly enjoyed being able to walk right over the hill to purchase just about anything we could ever need—from clothing to groceries—and just about everything in between. And even in a store with so many different items, there are still some almost overwhelming choices to make within the categories, and these choices remind us that God has blessed us in some amazing ways.

Think with me for a just a moment about the blessing of peanut butter. ****PPT**** All of us know the two basic choices: smooth or chunky. But it goes so much further than that! We can get processed or all natural peanut butter. We can get organic peanut butter. We can have it made by Jif, or Peter Pan, or Smuckers, or any number of specialty brands. We can get it in various flavors. Last night at Target, Silas and I saw dark chocolate peanut butter, cinnamon peanut butter, vanilla-cranberry peanut butter. We found roasted honey nut peanut butter. We can get it salted or unsalted. We can get small jars and big jars—glass or plastic—squeeze bottles, or even “Jif to Go” to put in a lunchbox for dipping stuff in. We can even get peanut butter in sheets—almost like those little plastic-covered slices of cheese—so we can make a sandwich without using a knife—you just lay it on the bread. We can get peanut butter pre-mixed with jelly—in a jar or in a squirt-bottle. We even found Smart Balance Omega peanut butter. We can go somewhere like Sam’s Club, and we can get a five-gallon pail of peanut butter. One of my favorites is the fact that we can get peanut butter delivered to us in little wrappers—on the inside of chocolate cups—Reese’s Peanut Butter Cups—we can have it in my favorite Culver’s Flavor of the Day. We can have peanut butter chocolate eggs, peanut butter Christmas trees, peanut butter M&M’s, peanut butter cookies, peanut butter pies, and on and on and on.

And in a nation with so much luxury, it is so tempting to forget that every blessing comes from God. From time to time, therefore, we need to slow down, realize what we have been given, and worship God. This morning, I would like to invite you to turn with me to the Old Testament book of Psalms—to **Psalm 100**. ****PPT**** As we turn to **Psalm 100**, I should point out that this is one of only a few Psalms without a single negative reference. In other words, it is all positive. There are no references

to enemies, or to death, or to sickness, or to sadness, or to sin of any kind. It is a very positive song.

And once we find **Psalm 100**, we might notice that the heading in the NASB is, "**All Men Exhorted to Praise God: A Psalm of Thanksgiving.**" If we skim down to **verse 1**, we notice that the Psalm is addressed to "**all the earth.**" Very interesting! People from all around the world are invited to praise the Lord. And then notice the end of the last verse—at the end of **verse 5**, the author refers to God's faithfulness being expressed, "**...to all generations.**" The Psalm applies to all people of all ages. The Psalm was written to us! And so this morning as we worship God, as we thank God for our many blessings, as we praise God even for peanut butter, I would like for us to slow down and ask ourselves whether we are worshiping God with the right attitude. Are we worshiping God correctly? Are we worshiping God in the right way? If you will, please look with me at **Psalm 100**...

- 1 Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth.**
- 2 Serve the LORD with gladness;
Come before Him with joyful singing.**
- 3 Know that the LORD Himself is God;
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.**
- 4 Enter His gates with thanksgiving
And His courts with praise.
Give thanks to Him, bless His name.**
- 5 For the LORD is good;
His lovingkindness is everlasting and
His faithfulness to all generations.**

This morning I would like for us to look at these five verses very carefully so that we will be able to worship God as we should.

I. One of the first things we notice is that WE ARE TO PRAISE THE LORD WITH JOYFUL ENTHUSIASM (verses 1-2). **PPT******

I think we might have to admit that we as a congregation can be rather "reserved" at times—maybe that is a polite way of putting it. We can come together, and we can sit together rather quietly. But you know, I have discovered something rather interesting. We can leave this building, and within an hour we can be sitting on the couch, and when Brett Favre throws a touchdown pass to Donald Driver, the same person who sat so quietly right here in this room will be jumping on the couch, yelling and pumping his fist in the air. What an amazing change has taken place!

And so the question is: If we can get that excited about the throwing of a ball, then can we not also get excited about our worship to God? Let us sing, and let us pray, and let us publicly read the Scriptures with the same joyful enthusiasm that we might have in any other area of life!

The Psalm starts in **verse 1** by saying, **"Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth."** The word **"shout"** refers to raising our voices, or giving a blast—in other words, we are to sing with the energy we would use if we were sounding a trumpet, as if we were sounding an alarm, as if we were running up and down the halls of a burning building, telling people to wake up and get out. The shouting we are talking about here is not some kind of irrational screaming, but according to the Psalm itself, it is to be a joyful shout. The KJV tells us to, **"Make a joyful noise,"** and so our praise and our thanksgiving is to be offered to God with a loud voice.

According to **verse 2**, we are to, **"Serve the Lord with gladness."** The NIV uses the word **"worship,"** that we are to **"worship the Lord with gladness,"** and that may be part of it, but the emphasis here is on serving the Lord. It's the idea of serving someone greater than we are—someone who is worthy of our service. We notice it does not say that we are to "serve the church." It does not say that we are to "serve the preacher." It does not even say that we are to "serve one another." But at least in this Psalm, we are told to, **"Serve the Lord with gladness."** In the New Testament, Jesus said, **"Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me"** (**Matthew 25:40**). When we serve, we are serving the Lord, and we are to do it, **"...with gladness."**

And then in **verse 3**, we have an invitation; we are to **"Come before Him with joyful singing."** Literally, we are invited to **"come before His face."** We are invited to come face-to-face with God through the songs that we sing. And as we sing to God face-to-face, we are not to sing by mumbling our songs, we are not to sing by just mouthing the words and hoping our neighbor doesn't notice, we are not to sing with great reservation, but the Bible says that we are to sing **"joyfully."** We are to praise the Lord with joyful enthusiasm!

Now before we move on, we need to try a little experiment. Without really thinking too much about it, just take a quick look at your neighbor. Did they look happy? Oh, I hope so, because we are here this morning to praise the Lord with joy! And if we can yell at a Badgers' game, if we yelled at the television or the radio this past Thursday evening, then certainly we can sing our songs with joyful enthusiasm.

II. As we go back to Psalm 100, we look at verse 3, and we find that WE ARE TO PRAISE THE LORD FOR A REASON—there is a PURPOSE FOR OUR PRAISE—or, as I put it on the wall back here, WE ARE TO PRAISE GOD WITH BRAIN! **PPT******

Verse 3 starts out with the word **"know."** **"Know that the Lord Himself is God...."** There is a clear emphasis on God all throughout this Psalm—in all five verses. In **verse 1**, we read about shouting to the Lord. In **verse 2** we read about serving the Lord. In **verse 3** we read about knowing the Lord. In **verse 4** we read about entering His gates and giving thanks to Him. And in **verse 5**, we read that the Lord is good. And so when we praise God, we absolutely have to think about who God is. We are to, **"Know that the Lord Himself is God."**

The fact that the Lord is God is something that we can **"know."** The word refers to knowledge based on absolute certainty—beyond a shadow of a doubt. Our worship, therefore, is to be thoughtful and intelligent. We need to keep our worship in perspective. Worship is not based on who we are—worship is based on who God is. Worship is based on a proper understanding of God. Our knowledge of God is to grow and expand over time.

As the Psalm goes on to say in the middle of **verse 3**, **"It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves."** And so as we worship, we are to think about this—we are confessing to God that He is more powerful than we are. God is the focus of our worship.

Worship, then, is something that we do regardless of our circumstances. We remember what happened to Job, a man whose story is recorded for us in the Old Testament. In **Job 1**, we find that Job's animals were stolen, his servants were murdered, the remaining animals were destroyed by fire, a building collapsed and killed all ten of his children. And yet in spite of all of those terrible things, Job responds in the last three verses of **Job 1**. The Bible says, **"Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. He said, 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.' Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God."** And so his reaction was rational. Job knew with his mind that, **"...the Lord Himself is God."** And Job knew with his mind that God was worthy of praise.

We could also look to King David when his baby son died. David's response to that tragedy is recorded for us in **2 Samuel 12:20**, **"So David arose from the ground, washed, anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he came into the house of the LORD and worshiped...."** I would suggest that if anyone ever had a right to be bitter, it would have been either Job or King David, but both of these men chose to worship God no matter what.

I have read that François Fenelon was the court preacher for King Louis XIV of France back in the 17th century. And apparently one Sunday when the king and his attendants arrived at the chapel for the regular service, no one else was there but the preacher. At that point, King Louis demanded, **"What does this mean?"** And the preacher replied, **"I had published that you would not come to church today, in order that your Majesty might see who serves God in truth and who flatters the king."** In a similar way, we come to worship God—we do not come to impress someone, we do not come because of some dynamic preacher or teacher—but we come because, **"...the Lord Himself is God."**

And then at the end of **verse 3**, the Bible says that, **"We are His people and the sheep of His pasture."** Unfortunately, sometimes we want to be the shepherd. But the Psalm reminds us once again that God is in charge, and we come to give praise to God. God is God, and we are not. God is our creator and our shepherd. If I create something, I am obviously greater than whatever it is that I created. And in the same way, God is so much greater and worthy of our praise.

And so we find, then, that our worship is not only to be offered with joy, but our praise is also to be done “with brain.” That is, our minds are to be engaged in our worship, because we, ***“Know that the Lord Himself is God.”***

III. As we look back to Psalm 100, we see a third and final aspect of our worship (in verses 4-5) as we find that WE ARE TO PRAISE GOD TOGETHER. We are to worship WITH OTHERS. **PPT******

Please notice in verse 4 that we are to, ***“Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise.”*** I would agree with most of the comments that others have made on this verse when they see this as a reference to corporate worship. The word “corporate” refers to the “body,” and so when we refer to “corporate worship,” we are referring to the worship that we do together as the body of Christ, as the family of God. And yes, there is a value to worshipping God on our own (we should be doing this every day), but there is also a special value to coming together as a congregation of God’s people. At the time this Psalm was written, the people would come together at the temple, and so the song says that we are to, ***“Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise.”***

Over in the New Testament, we also see the value of worshipping God as a group. In Hebrews 10:23-25, the Bible gives a strong word of encouragement (almost in the form of a warning). The Bible says, ***“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”***

And so when we come together we are encouraging one another. And according to Psalm 100, as we come together we are to, ***“Give thanks to Him, [and] bless His name.”*** It’s almost like we enter the Lord’s house with a password. Did you catch the password at the beginning of verse 4? We are to, ***“Enter His gates with thanksgiving.”*** The password for entering God’s gates is, “Thank you—Thank you, God!”

And then at the end, we find in verse 5 that, ***“...the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations.”*** God is good! All of this is repeated in the New Testament as we find in James 1:17 that, ***“Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”***

Conclusion:

As we close, we need to remember that we are living in a very prosperous nation—the land of a thousand peanut butters. And again, this is just one small example of the millions of blessings we have all around us. But we can never forget that God is

the source of every blessing. And so as we worship, we need to recommit to praising and thanking God as we should. We need to examine ourselves to make sure that we are approaching God with the right attitude.

Summary:

- We have learned this morning that we are to praise God with joy—with joyful enthusiasm—we need to put our hearts into it—we need to praise God with passion.
- We are to praise God “with brain”—that, is, we are to praise God on purpose—we are to praise Him for a reason. We can know God, and He is a God worth knowing.
- And finally, we are to praise God together—we are to come together with one another, and we offer our praise together as a congregation. We are to strengthen and encourage one another as we worship.

Invitation:

The good news is that Jesus paid the price for our sins by allowing Himself to be nailed to a cross, He was buried, but He was raised up on the third day. We imitate the good news by putting away sin and by allowing ourselves to be buried in water before we are lifted up to live a brand new life. If you are ready to make a lifelong commitment to live the Christian life, you can be baptized within the hour, and we would invite you to let us know about your decision as we sing the next song. Let's stand and sing...

To comment on this lesson: church@fourlakescoc.org