

November 17, 2024

“A Song of Thanksgiving”
Lesson 3

Psalm 100

Intro

Psalm 100 is familiar to many Christians. But it is not a “stand-alone” Psalm. It is part of a group, usually consisting of Psalms 90-106. The emphasis of these psalms is that God reigns always, even when there are problems and challenges occurring for His people. The verbs in this psalm are plural, meaning they refer to all the people, not just to one person. All express their appreciation for God’s works among them. The reasons for this gratitude are given in Psalms 93-99. Since Psalm 100 is so short, it seems likely that it wasn’t meant to be read alone, but to be read as the conclusion of the previous seven psalms.

Read Psalm 100

1. vs. 1: The phrase translated “shout for joy” comes from a single word in Hebrew

The word occurs 28 times in total in the book of Psalms

Four of those uses involve making some kind of noise “to the Lord”

The same verb is used in Joshua describing the shouting at the wall of Jericho

The call to shout with joy in worship speaks of high enthusiasm and excitement

“All the earth” is called to “shout to the Lord”

This phrase “all the earth” is used 17 times in the Psalms

There are two ways of interpreting this phrase’s meaning

One is that the phrase applies to Israel

Wherever the people are in the world, they are to praise God

The second is that this encouragement is for both Jews and Gentiles alike

This suggests that the whole earth is called to worship and praise God

There is the expectation that Gentiles will join Jews in this praise

This idea is repeated many times in the OT

Abraham’s family was to be a blessing “to all peoples on the earth”

See also Isaiah 2:1-4, Micah 4:1-4, and Zech. 9:10

2. vs. 2: Worshipping the Lord is here given as a command/request

It is something we are called to do, something we are supposed to do

The motivation for us worshipping is our “gladness”

We are glad to worship Him because of His kindness to us

Worshipping someone also means that we are serving that one

We don’t serve/worship God out of fear or with an eye to gaining

Both of these ways imply that our actions/works will gain us something

Serving God with gladness gets rid of worry, and allows for simple trust in Him

His mercy and kindness are the reasons for our gladness in worship

There are times when we are not glad, and that is addressed in Scripture as well

Israel often used laments to help express their pain and loss

God makes room for our pain to be expressed as well

The invitation to “come” implies getting together with other believers for worship
Here the believers worship through “joyful songs”
Worshipping together through songs allows us to rejoice together in God’s mercies

3. vs. 3: The first two verses tell us what we are called to do

This verse tells us why

“Know that the Lord is God”

God is the one who has done continuous miracles for his people

Took Israel out of Egypt, sustained them in the wilderness

Provided food across the seasons, provided salvation

Other “gods” have not done these things—only the Lord of Heaven has

The psalm encourages God’s praise for “all the earth”

This verse can also be seen as addressing all, since it follows the previous two

The main idea of this verse is for us to “know” God

We can only know what God has revealed, and what He has equipped us to know

We know that he made a covenant with Abraham, that He is involved with humans

We are reminded that “it is He who made us”

We can know God by remembering and acknowledging His creation

Humanity, animals, plant life, water, etc

We know Him because we know He cares for us

“We are His people, the sheep of His pasture”

God has called us to Himself, and cares for us like a shepherd does sheep

4. vs. 4: The “gates” and “courts” both are part of the temple areas to which all people had access

The temple centered around the holy of holies, which only the high priest could enter

A court outside of that was open only to priests

Another court outside the one above was open to men of Israel

The courts on the outside perimeter were open to women and Gentiles

This verse envisions the people singing inside the temple courtyards

Psalms 24, 120-134, and 149-150 speak of processions, dancing, and crowds

These people are to enter “with thanksgiving” and “praise”

This is a time of worship and celebration

The last line calls for the people to “give thanks...and praise His name”

God is due our thanks for all He has done and continues to do for us daily

Praising His name means to elevate His name above all others

Worship then is not primarily a time of inspiring people

It is a time for connecting people to God by remembering Him

5. vs. 5: The psalm ends with this verse showing reasons for people to praise God

The first is “The Lord is good”

God has healed, forgiven, rescued, shown faithfulness and trustworthiness

All of these and more are proofs that God is good

His love is demonstrated by doing these things for people who are stubborn and selfish

Humanity struggles against itself, yet God never changes; he is always “good”

We are reminded of God’s unchanging ways in the last phrase

“His faithfulness continues through *all* generations

This shows that the future generations as well can count on God’s faithfulness

This is another reason for people to praise God during times of worship
We hope in God because He is always loving, good, and faithful

Application: Psalm 100 concludes a group of psalms by inviting all human beings, especially those of Israel, to worship God in the joyful knowledge that he loves them and will care for them. This psalm ends with a look toward the future. Instead of the future being bleak and/or hopeless, Psalm 100 shows that an eternal God will always care for those who seek Him, who praise Him. All people are invited to praise God, not just those of Israel. By praising God, we are not ignoring the tough realities of this life; we are being given a way to understand what those details can mean when we submit them to a loving and faithful God.

Prayer: Father God, You alone are God, and You have made us in wonderful ways. Help us to celebrate what You have done, what You are doing, and what You will do for Your creation. Help us to recall who we are, Your treasured people, so that we may invite others into that same relationship with You. In Jesus' name, Amen.