

Psalm 100
Singing Our Hearts Out
WRCoB 11.24.24

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHDzT6Qj12w>

The video showed people praising God
Amidst incredible hardship.

It makes me ask the question
What's *really* driving our worship this morning?

I'm thrilled to see you but
What brought you through these doors this morning?

Is it to get your spiritual tank filled?
Hoping to hear life-changing words from me?

Maybe it's the music, or catching up with friends

Nothing wrong with any of that, honestly
Great reasons to be in church.

But the video reminds us
Of the importance of the message of Psalm 100.

Which redirects our focus from self
To the source of all blessing.

Psalm 100 reminds us there's something deeper
Something more to a worship service
Than “what's in it for me” church.

Rather, it's about a joyful, overflowing thanks
To the God who created us
Who redeemed us
And who loves us unconditionally.

The psalm is a recipe for worship.

From start to finish it conveys gratitude and praise.

It's loaded with action phrases.

- Make a joyful noise (1)
- Worship the Lord (1)
- Come before his presence with singing (1)
- Know the Lord (2)
- Enter his gates with thanksgiving (2)
- Give thanks and bless God's name (2)

It's all about praise and worship
Gratitude and thanksgiving
All components of a worship service.

Because the word worship
When broken down means, “Worthy of honor”

We're not here to honor ourselves!

Using Psalm 100 as a model, then

True worship is the joyful response to God's goodness.

And church expresses worship in many various ways.

From a Quaker silent meeting

Where at times, not a word is spoken
Nor a song is sung

To a Pentecostal worship style

In which there is the speaking in tongues
And singing and dancing up and down the aisles.

The thing to remember about worship is.

That ultimately, it's not really about us
It's about God!

Many of us are creatures of habit.

We're comfortable with how we've done worship

And thinking about changing it up a bit
Can really be a challenge.

Introducing the guitar

Songs that are more contemporary
Songs not in our hymnal
Can be challenging to some.



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"Please disregard the music director's admonition to 'clap your hands, stomp your feet, and boogie til you drop' during the next hymn."

The cartoon reflects the resistance
Some feel towards new worship styles.

But our Minister of Music has shown us
That embracing diverse worship styles
Can deepen our spiritual experience

Her musical leadership has challenged West Richmond
As she introduces music with more energy.

She started 4th Sunday Praise and Worship
To stretch us, to push us to be more expressive
In the way we sing and give praise to God.

I believe that's why God called her here
To challenge us if only just a little
To get us out of our comfort zones
To offer a musical diversity
That newer folk might resonate with

Her job is not easy.

We can be a bit stuck in our ways
We don't want to change
We like it the way it's been

I think we've really benefited from Vanessa's leadership

She's reminded us that it's a good thing to praise God.

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Yes, we can worship God in many places
In nature, in a concert, in a prayer meeting
And in Bible study.

But Sunday morning is how we worship regularly.

And we express it best through song and word.

So much of Psalm 100 has to do with singing.

Psalm 100 KJV

¹ Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands . . . ;

² come before his presence with singing.

Singing together, worshiping God

Singing our hearts out in authentic ways

Makes God come alive in worship.

Singing brings unity of Spirit

With God and with one another

God enjoys our praise and worship.

Psalm 147:11-20 CEV

**¹¹ The Lord is pleased with those who worship him
and trust his love.**

And in doing so, giving God all the glory

And praising God with heart and soul

In unity with God and with one another

We receive the added bonus of

Of the many spiritual and emotional benefits

We come to church initially seeking.

When we focus our worship on God

It somehow satisfies those personal needs

We came to church to begin with.

Donald Hustad writes in *Leadership*

Somehow, about forty percent of churchgoers seem to have picked up the idea that "singing in church is for singers."

The truth is that "singing is for believers." The relevant question is not, "Do you have a voice?" but "Do you have a song?"

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Years ago, a baby girl was blinded in an accident.

As an adult living to be over 90-years-old
She composed over 8000 hymns.

Her name was Fanny Crosby and she wrote
"Blessed Assurance"
"I Am Thine, O Lord"
"To God Be The Glory"

When she was eight, she wrote this poem:

*Oh, what a happy child I am, although I cannot see.
I am resolved that in this world, contented I will be.
How many blessings I enjoy that other people don't.
To weep and sigh because I'm blind--I cannot and I won't.*

It is good to give voice to our gratitude
Singing with passion and abandon.

There's another component of worship
Found in Psalm 100, in verse 2

Psalm 100:2

**Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us,
and we are his; we are his people and the sheep of
his pasture.**

Knowing the Lord isn't just about knowing the Bible.

We can "know" the history of Jesus
But not "KNOW" Jesus as Lord.

Knowing God is a deeply personal
And transformative experience
Profoundly shaping our worship.

When we become aware of just how good God is
God's unwavering love
God's boundless mercy
God's ever persistent quest of us

Our act of worship changes.

It becomes less about us and more about God.

The knowledge of God's redemptive power
God's willingness to forgive and restore
Fills our hearts with gratitude and thanksgiving

We shift from singing and praying
Without giving much thought to the words on our lips

To a heart-felt expression of worship.

“How can we keep from singing!”

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I knew someone who started coming to church
Because she felt a need for something
She really couldn't identify.

She enjoyed being a part of something.

But the actual worship
The songs, the prayers the scriptures, the sermon
Didn't resonate with her spirit.

But over time, as she got to know more about God
And God's love for her
Worship took on a different meaning

It became all about praising the goodness of God.

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We need to prepare for Sunday services
And I don't mean getting our Sunday best on

We need to spiritually and emotional prepare
To come to church
In anticipation of meeting God

To pause remembering God's graciousness
Before we enter the doors of our sanctuary

We will enter the sanctuary the way verse 4 describes.

Psalm 100:4 KJV

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

We enter worship with praise and thanksgiving

Yes, we may not be experiencing joy at the moment
We may be going through hard times

But worship involves setting aside
Those things that bring us down
And letting the Spirit wash over us

By coming to worship
Placing God first and foremost
As the focal point of our praise

We will find ourselves thankful
And filled with gratitude.

Psalm 100:5

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

Verse 5 is the reason we worship

It is why we come together every Sunday morning
Lifting our voices in joyful worship

It is why the Quakers sit in silence

And the Pentecostals roll around on the floor

It is why Brethren sing 4-part harmony

And the Africans dance and beats their drums

It's because we have a good, good, God

Who loves us so much

That we can't help but express joy and gratitude.

God is worthy and that's why we worship.

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While on a short-term mission trip

Pastor Jack Hinton was leading worship

At a leper colony on the island of Tobago.

A woman who had been facing away

From the pulpit turned around.

"It was the most hideous face I had ever seen,"

Hinton said.

"The woman's nose and ears were entirely gone."

"She lifted a fingerless hand in the air and asked

'Can we sing *Count Your Many Blessings?*' "

Overcome with emotion, Hinton left the service.

He was followed by a team member who said

"I guess you'll never be able to sing that song again."

"Yes, I will," he replied

"but I'll never sing it the same way."

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This Thanksgiving celebration

Let's leave this place committed

To a worship:

That is less about us and more about God

Less about getting and more about giving

And less about self-seeking

And more about selfless serving

Let's leave here today

With hearts overflowing with gratitude

Our voices in joyful praise

Not just today

Not just on Sundays

But throughout the week, every week

Serve the Lord with gladness

Come before his presence with singing.

But let's not stop there.

This Thanksgiving, beyond the turkey and football.

Let's take some time to reflect on God's many blessings

Simply take a moment each day

To silently thank God for His presence.

And remember, true worship

Extends beyond these walls.

Let's commit to serving others throughout the week

Reflecting God's love in tangible ways.

In doing so, our worship becomes a lifestyle

A constant expression of our love and gratitude

For the One who is worthy of all our praise.