

As I mentioned in introducing the service, we will use Psalm 100 for our text both today and next Sunday. We will read the entire Psalm but today we will focus on verses 1-3 then next week we will zero in on verses 4-5.

1 *“Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! 2 Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. 3 Know that the Lord, He 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 into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. 5 For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.”*

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Do you get the idea that our worship is meant to be a joyful affair? “Make a Joyful shout to the Lord!” “Serve the Lord with gladness!” “Come before His presence with singing.” And it’s not just a reserved joy that we keep inside. The Hebrew word for “singing” indicates a joyful singing, or exaltation. And the joyful shout is like the shouting and cheering when your team wins the big game. It’s a joy that can’t be contained.

Does that describe your worship? It’s easy to simply fall into a routine of worship. We go through the motions, but is our heart rejoicing in God? Do we express that joy in boisterous praise? That is not something we can just put on. If you just start shouting our singing at the top of your lungs, that does nothing. It’s also not about letting everyone see how good you can sing. Making a joyful shout to the Lord and joyful singing must come from the heart. If we have other things on our minds, other cares and worries dragging us down, then we will not have joyful worship.

That is why we suggest a Psalm for you to read in preparation for worship. We need to get into the proper frame of mind for worship. Start thinking about the greatness of God and all He has done for you. Only he can fill you with praise.

Today’s preparation Psalm was Psalm 95. That Psalm also begins with a call to joyful shouts of praise. “Oh come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.” That’s a recurring theme in the Psalms, and they remind us of the many, many reasons we have to truly rejoice and to sing joyful songs of praise to our God. In Psalm 100 the first reason comes in verse 3, “Know that the Lord, He is God.” So today we will

Make a Joyful Shout to the Lord, For He IS GOD!

-I- The Psalmist wants us to **“KNOW that the LORD, He is God.”**

At the time of the Psalmist, every nation had their own gods. The Egyptians had Ra the sun god, and many lesser gods. The Canaanites had Baal and Asherah and others. The Ammonites had Molech. The Babylonians had Marduk and many others. All the nations knew that the God of Israel was Jehovah or Jahweh. To them He was just another of the many gods in the world. Most nations had multiple gods because they think of God in terms of human abilities. No one god can do everything. But the LORD can and does. But God said, “All the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens.” Psalm 96:5

God describes the foolishness of worshiping such idols in Ps. 115:4-8 “Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.” Yet Israel was always drawn to these so called gods of the other nations. They needed to know that the LORD, Jehovah was the only true God. He states over and over,

“There is no other.” Like in Isaiah 45:5-6 “I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other.”

This is something we still need to know for certain because the world is still full of false gods and idols. It’s not just the myriad of Hindu gods or the god of the Buddhists, or the Sikhs, or Muslims. All these gods are finding their way more and more into North American culture. However, the more common idols today are the gods of intellectuals—the gods of science and human achievement and will. The god’s of pleasure and of choice, the gods of convenience, and acceptance. Basically these all come down to one god, the god of SELF. That’s the god that allows your own feelings and your own sense of right and wrong to rule. That is the god that accepts everything EXCEPT the God who claims to be the only true God and to have the only way to life. That God is considered the greatest enemy of our modern society.

Today as much as ever we need to **“KNOW that the LORD, He is God.”** No one else!

-II- The wonderful thing is The LORD Has Proven that He is GOD!

A phrase that is repeated over and over in the Bible is, “Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.” God told the people ahead of time what He was going to do and then He did it. Like when the Lord promised to deliver Israel from the Egyptians and told them how He would do it and then He did it. God said, “I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.” (Exodus 6:7). In the wilderness, the LORD made it clear that He provided for the needs of His people. “I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’” (Ex. 16:12)

God didn’t expect them to blindly believe in Him without any proof. He repeatedly gave them visible, tangible proof that the LORD is God so that they could know for certain. You remember Elijah and the prophets of Baal. Elijah proposed a challenge to all the people of Israel. The prophets of Baal were to prepare a bull for a sacrifice and he would do the same, but instead of lighting the fire themselves, Elijah said, “You call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the Lord, and the God who answers by fire, he is God.” And all the people answered, “It is well spoken.” You all know the result. The LORD made it crystal clear that He was God not Baal when He sent fire that not only burned up the bull but licked up all the water Elijah poured over the offering and burned up the rocks of the altar itself.

God still provides that proof today by preserving physical evidence of so many of these events. Archeology has produced a treasure trove of proof that these accounts in the Bible actually happened. They are real. Therefore we know God is real.

Do you ever wonder how Israel could turn away from the LORD after seeing all that the Lord could do for them, and worship the idols of the other nations? Well don’t be surprised! The gods of the people all around us today are very appealing to our own human nature. Many thousands of confessing Christians have already turned away from the LORD who has all power in heaven and on earth, to worship the popular gods of our society. We need to KNOW that the LORD is God, and we can know when we see how He has Proven that He is God.

Finally when you know that the LORD is God then you will also

-III- Rejoice to KNOW that the LORD is YOUR GOD!

What a great reason to “shout joyfully to the Lord.” What a privilege to “Come into His presence with joyful singing.” He is the one true God. And He is OUR God. The Psalmist goes on to

mention what that means for us. “It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves.” That seems so obvious you wonder why the Psalmist felt compelled to say it. No one can make themselves. The thought is absurd, yet that is exactly what the evolutionists believe. They state it as a proven fact that all living things evolved all by themselves without any intelligence, without any design, without any outside power. It just happened!

As absurd as the idea is, that thought has great appeal to our flesh. For IF we made ourselves, we are our own god and we can make our own rules. IF we made ourselves, we are accountable to no one, so we can disregard all of the commands and laws in the Bible. And there will be no eternal punishment for our “sins.” William Ernest Henley described this belief in his poem *Invictus*. “It matters not how strait the gate, How charged with punishments the scroll, I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul.” That all sounds appealing until you get cancer or some other disaster strikes that you have no power or control over. If there is no God, then you have no where to turn in time of need.

What a tremendous joy it is to know, “It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves.” There is an almighty God who created us and all things. When we see this world as God’s creation, then we are filled with joyful praise to God. We see the vastness of the Universe and know that God is even more vast, truly infinite. We see the intricacy of every living thing and know that He is infinitely wiser than we and truly knows all things. We see the beauty of a single flower, and know that God is truly a God of love who appreciates beauty and gives us all things to enjoy. We see our families and know that God is not a distant God but a God of relationships. He made us to have relationships and that gives the hope that we can have a relationship with Him.

So the next phrase of this Psalm gives us even more reason to rejoice. “We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.” When we know what God did so that we could be His people and the sheep of His pasture, even though we had forsaken Him, we are simply overwhelmed with joyful praise. When we know the truth about ourselves the way Paul described in our Epistle reading from Romans 7, that we are truly wretched people who do the things we don’t want to do and we don’t do the things we want to do and know are right to do, then we too are overjoyed and sing out, “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

We have a gracious God to turn to, the God who has all power in heaven and earth. He is the God who invites us to “Cast all your cares upon Him for He cares for you.” 1 Peter 5:7 When we realize how weak and fail and sinful we are, it is the most joyful, reassuring thing to KNOW that the LORD is OUR God.

Let us truly shout for joy! We have come into His presence, therefore let us Sing joyfully **Hymn 39, Praise to the Lord, the Almighty.** And then let us go and “Serve the Lord with gladness.”

Amen.