

THE SUMMER IN THE PSALMS 02: PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE WORSHIP Psalm 100

Introduction: Traveling on Vacation

- Many of you know what it's like to travel on vacation with several children. It can be difficult. This week, we will be doing our best Griswold impersonations, hopping in the car and driving lots of miles.
- With little kids, it is always interesting driving long distances. It is certainly a good test of my character. But I think if it were up to me, I would institute a few rules to make the trip more efficient. You see, for me, its about getting there, not the process. The vacation starts when we arrive, not while we are going. So, here are rules I have thought about instituting:
 - *Rule #1: We only stop when we need gas.* Who has ever had to stop 10 miles down the road? I have! Because of this rule, it would mean there is basically no drinking allowed in the car, because if you drink, you will have to use the bathroom. That would constitute a needless stop. Learn to hold it.
 - *Rule #2: Nobody is allowed to ask, "Are we there yet?"* You know, this usually happens in the first hour of the trip. Last year, we drove from Kansas to Northeastern Pennsylvania & about 30 minutes into the trip, my daughter asked if we were still in Kansas and if we were close to being there. Does it look like we are there?
 - *Rule #3: You must use headphones.* If you are watching movies on the DVD player, headphones are a must. There may be nothing worse than having to listen to a movie without watching it. Unless there is a screen up front where I can watch and drive at the same time, I don't want to listen to it.
 - *Rule #4: No touching anyone.* Everyone must keep their hands to themselves the entire trip. There is absolutely no need to reach over and touch your brother or sister.
 - *Rule #5: Keep the vehicle clean.* Sometimes when we arrive to our destination, it looks like an F-5 tornado went through the back of the van. There is debris build up that often; the kids have to climb over things to get out. It's just ridiculous. They will be responsible for keeping things clean.
- Now that I've told you I am completely thoughtless and mean, let me tell you this is not how we travel. At moments of weakness, this is how I would like it, but we do not have these rules (for the most part).
- But you know what I mean, it is often difficult to travel long distances and still remain Christian! I'm not sure why this is the case, but it is often very difficult to worship Jesus and go on vacation!

Well, this morning, I want to give us some good motivation so that we can go on vacation and still worship Jesus. Actually, I want to have us all focus our attention and time on some very practical principles for worship that will be beneficial at any time.

 *Psalm 100 [read]*

First off, do you see a subtitle? It is called *A Psalm of Thanksgiving*. In fact, it is the only Psalm given this specific designation. What I hope you noticed about this Psalm even in one reading is that there is a close connection in this Psalm between thanksgiving and worship or praise. They are so closely linked that it is hard to see the difference between them. And truly it does make sense: how can we truly worship that which we are not thankful for, and how can we be truly thankful without worshipping? They are two sides of the same coin!

As we look through this Psalm, there are some great imperatives, where the author of this Psalm tells us how to worship.

Vs. 1 – shout

Vs. 2 – serve & come

Vs. 3 – know

Vs. 4 – enter, give thanks, bless

He is so consumed with the greatness of God that he is moved to tell others how and what they are to do. Or better yet, he is trying to instruct us and give advice on what effective worship looks like. As we study Psalm 100, what we find are **5 PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE WORSHIP!** I truly believe that if we really understand these, then we can worship Jesus anywhere at anytime.

1. WORSHIP WITH JOYFUL EXCITEMENT (VS. 1)

Do you notice how the Psalm starts out? What is the first word? It is shout! I think the KJV says “make a joyful noise”, the NKJV says, “make a joyful shout,” and the NIV says “shout.” The point is that there is verbal action behind the worship being demonstrated.

The shouting or noise making indicates that it is important to the person what the object of their worship has done, or who that person is. Understanding the character or nature of God should make us excited for Him! And sometimes move us to shout joyfully to Him!

Does this mean that we should walk into church and shout? Does it mean that we should be as loud as we can when we walk into the worship service? It is helpful to understand the meaning of this Hebrew word has to do with the gladness of heart behind the shouting. It is made clearer by the use of the

word “joy” in this verse. In fact, in vs. 2, we are told to sing with joy as well. Two short quotes to help explain this:

James Montgomery Boice said: *“It would be accurate to express this idea by saying that the people of God are to praise God loudly because they are happy with him.”*¹

Charles Spurgeon also said: *“Our happy God should be worshiped by a happy people.”*²

In some way, I do always struggle with this verse as to its application. Does this mean that we should joyfully shout to the Lord? Yes, but does it mean that we should always be like that? I have come to the conclusion that our oral response to God in worship is like a pendulum. On the one side is quiet contemplation and on the other side it is loud shouting. There are times for both! And if we spend our time too much on one side or the other, we could be out of balance.

Maybe it is that there are times in life that we should have louder expressions of our joy in the Lord and there are times when we should have quieter expressions of humility and contemplation of what He has done, who He is. My greatest concern is not necessarily the volume, but the joy! What I mean by that is that if the joy is there, there will be times of excitement, times of loud shouting. Let me illustrate this joyful excitement with two examples, one contemporary & one biblical.

Illustration: Sporting Events—we get excited & joyfully shout!

- Chicago Cubs—in just over a week, I will be taking my family to Wrigley Field in Chicago for the first time (well, for the kids). We are really fanatical Cubs fans. I can tell you, there will be countless people screaming, yelling, and shouting—myself included. And hopefully, the Cubs win the game, for they are the only team I know of that has a song that is sung after a win! The entire stadium, inside & out, will sing “Go Cubs Go.” It is sort of like their worship song! And if we were to ever win the World Series, the city might burn down again.
- Your kids sporting events—do you yell when something happens? JT’s minor league team won a tournament a few weeks ago when they scored 3 runs w/ 2 outs in the bottom of the last inning to win by 1 . . . trust me, there was excitement and yelling!
- Why does this happen? Because there is great joy in what you just saw. You were so moved that you enthusiastically responded.

And then we come to church and our response is, “quiet boredom.” What? Let me ask a very difficult question: Could it be that the reason why there is louder expressions of worship to these sort of things instead of to God

¹ Boice, James Montgomery. *Psalms, Volume 2*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), 811.

² Spurgeon, Charles Haddon. *The Treasury of David*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 881.

because there is seemingly more joy found in these things than in God Himself?

Here's the other illustration: What do you think Heaven is going to be like? Well, we are given a picture of it in the Scriptures. Do you think there will be joy in heaven? Let us look at what will be going on there:

 *Revelation 4–5 [open & read]*

I mean, can you imagine being there in Heaven at that scene and responding like some of us do on Sunday mornings? Did you notice there are lots of people shouting, singing, and speaking with loud voices. That is what the Psalmist says in vs. 1. He says to “shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth.” Who should do the shouting? This is a universal call: everyone should do it!

That means you, it means me, that means that we do not worship with sadness. If you want to be effective in your worship to the Lord, it must start with joyful excitement!

Here is one question to ask yourself on the way home: What steals my joy for Jesus? What steals my enthusiasm for Jesus? If we want to effectively worship God, then we need to Worship with Joyful Excitement!

2. WORSHIP WITH WILLING SERVICE (VS. 2A)

I say willing service, because our service to God is to be done out of a glad heart. This is interesting, because one of the ways in which we can worship the Lord is to serve Him, but only when we serve Him with gladness. What does it mean that it is done with gladness? It means that the service flows from the heart of joy.

In the same way that the shouting is done with joy, our service is to be done with joy or gladness. What is the point? Our service to God is out of our willingness, out of our excitement! Here is the connection; this is how it plays out in our lives . . .

 *1 Peter 4:7–11 → “As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength, which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

What is the goal when we come to serve one another? It is really fairly simple: The goal is THE GLORY OF GOD! Do you notice that Peter says God is glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory, & dominion forever and ever. Amen. That happens when we serve and use our gifts that

He has given us for the body of Christ. Ministry to one another counts as authentic worship toward God!

As we are faithful in being serious about our gifts in the body of Christ (or even in the previous section, Peter talks about praying for one another, loving one another, being hospitable with one another)—as we do these things it glorifies God! That means when you pick up the chairs, you are worshipping God. When you give your money, you are worshipping God. When you use your musical talents in helping others worship, you are worshipping God.

If you serve by working on the new building, it is worshipping God. When you teach children on Sundays, it is worshipping God. When you usher, it is worshipping God. When you serve as an elder or deacon, it is worshipping God. But note the heart behind the service—that is what really matters! It is service with gladness.

So, if it's Saturday night and you pull open that tub of materials to prepare to teach the children on Sunday and your heart is one of duty—as if you are thinking, “why can't someone else do this—then that act of service is not worship. It is not done in gladness.

As well, this is not the sort of service that flows from a heart that thinks God needs to be repaid for all He has done for you. Like if you subtly think you need to repay God, then it is not worship. That is works salvation, just masked with service. No, it is service to God, knowing that we are doing it in His strength, to His glory, with gladness of heart!

So, those who are Effective Worshipers, not only worship with Joyful Excitement, but also with Willing Service. There is a 3rd principal:

3. WORSHIP WITH JOYFUL SINGING (VS. 2B)

He has been talking about worship in general, but now he gets specific about one aspect of worship and that has to do with singing! The author says that we should “come before Him with joyful singing.” Now, this is a command! We are commanded to worship the Lord with singing. One commentator said:

*“Music is the form through which we are to express our gladness. Many people whistle or hum when they are happy. Our song is not to create our gladness but to express it.”*³

Isaac Watts wrote a Hymn called *Come, We That Love the Lord*. It's not really sung anymore, in fact, not sure it ever was that much. Yet, in the 3rd Stanza, he penned some very insightful words:

³ Williams, Donald. *Mastering the Old Testament: Psalms 73–150*. (Dallas, TX: Word, 1987), 218.

*Let those refuse to sing, who never knew our God:
But favorites of the heavenly king, must speak His praise abroad.*

One of my favorite stories ever in the OT is the commissioning of the Temple by Solomon. Can you imagine this scenario? The Temple has finally been built. Solomon has accomplished this great building project before the Lord and now they are bringing the great Ark of the Covenant into the Temple and it is one Grand Ceremony.

We are told that all the priests consecrated themselves. They brought out all the best singers to help lead. They had all sorts of instruments, including 120 trumpets. Here is what happened:

📖 2 Chronicles 5:13–14 → ¹³ *in unison when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and to glorify the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and when they praised the LORD saying, "He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting," then the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud,* ¹⁴ *so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.*

Can you imagine someone showing up that day and saying, “I don’t feel like singing today!” NO, they understood what it meant to “Come before Him with joyful singing.” They were moved by the Lord and they saw Him as worthy to sing to, so they lifted up their voice and praised the Lord.

Have you ever thought about why we sing in church? Kind of curious, isn’t it? But did you know that music was created originally for a purpose: to be a worshipful. I might be stretching it a bit here, but there is something special about music. There is some sort of connection between worship and music that doesn’t exist with other forms of media. In fact, did you know that the first mention of music in the Bible is at the time of creation?

Job 38:7 records that at the creation of the world, “the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” “Stars of the morning and the sons of God” refers to the angelic realms, God’s angels or the angelic realms. VIP—the singing of praises to God took place at the creation of the world. 1st mention of worship = 1st mention of music. These two concepts are linked together forever! And so we sing, for when we sing, we bring forth worship to the Almighty God of the Universe!

STRONG STATEMENT: Dead People Do Not Sing! I do not frequent the graveyards very often, but when I am there, I have never heard someone singing from the grave. I really believe the same principle applies spiritually to the believer & unbeliever.

The Bible talks about the unbeliever being dead in their sins, they are like dead men walking. Those who are regenerated, those who have been brought to life by the regenerating power of the Spirit, now have breath and they sing. Sure, sometimes the words might cause you to become overwhelmed. Sure, sometimes you won't like the style of the song. Sure, there will be times of feeling down, but for the most part, regenerate people sing! And they sing joyfully!

4. WORSHIP WITH PROPER HUMILITY (vs. 3)

What does this say? It says that we should know something very important about who God is & who we are. The understanding of our different roles as people before God is helpful in developing in us a heart for worship.

We are not to be like those people in Acts 17 who were worshipping “An Unknown God.” Can you imagine how empty that would feel? I am worshipping—oh yea, who are you worshipping? I don't know, just someone or something though!

Christian, this is not true for us. We are to “KNOW” who we are worshipping. And most importantly, we are to know that He is God and that we are not. That is why I say we worship with Humility! Listen, it is impossible to worship God if in some way we think that we should be on that throne! When the author says, “It is He who has made us and not we ourselves,” it is a loud shot across the heart of pride!

The Creator deserves to be worshipped by the creation! But, it is not some sort of impersonal relationship. He continues by saying that “we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.” Shepherds take care of their sheep! They fight for them. They protect them. They keep them safe. And for us, this imagery is seen all throughout the ministry of Jesus. He is the Good Shepherd.

📖 *John 10:11 → “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”*

📖 *John 10:14–16 → “I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.”*

He is God and we are not! That means that we worship Him and not ourselves! Let us come before the Lord with Humility. There might be nothing worse than saying that we want to worship the Lord and then remove Him from His throne so that we can sit upon it!

5. WORSHIP WITH OVERFLOWING THANKFULNESS (vs. 4–5)

Notice a few simple observations: First, we are to enter with thanksgiving. That means that thanksgiving should be something that overflows from us all during the week and then when we come to gather together we are thankful. This is not just something that we do one week a year after we have eaten some turkey and some dressing and some potatoes! Well, not me, cause I don't eat potatoes! We are to be thankful all the time! And because we are thankful all the time, we enter to worship Him with thanksgiving. It is ever before us!

Also notice that the author so wants this point driven home that he says it several ways, with several imperatives. Enter His Courts with thanksgiving, & His courts with praise, Give thanks to Him, Bless His name! These are all repetitions of saying the same thing: We need to enter into worship and praise God because we are thankful!

So, the question this morning, when you entered into this room to worship, were you thankful for God? For Jesus? For the Cross? This is the 3rd week in a row that this is coming up before us. Are we trusting, are we thankful for who He is and what He has done. Nothing else, take it all away, are we thankful to just have Him?

Of course, I use this room and this morning as an example, however, I do not think this passage is only talking about entering a building. It is everywhere we go now in the world. Why should we do it? The reason that the author gives us as to why we should be thankful in vs. 5 is based in the character of WHO God is! Why be thankful?

a) Because the Lord is Good

Do you believe that the Lord is Good? Do you really? Do you have the attitude of the Psalmist when he said,

 *Psalm 119:68 → "You are good and do good; teach me Your statutes."*

How do we see the Lord being Good? Usually when everything in our external world is good! Yet He is Good even when things in our world are not good. Isn't this what we talked about last week? That we can still bless the Lord when we are at the bottom of the barrel. I know we have said it several times, but let me emphasize that what goes on around us does not change the "Goodness of our God."

- When the stock market crashes, the Lord is Good!
- When you lose your job, the Lord is still Good!
- When your child becomes ill, the Lord has not lost His Goodness!
- When your spouse leaves you in your marriage, the Lord is Good!

- ☐ When you are feeling down and depressed over your career, the Lord is Good!
- ☐ When your family is effected by natural disasters (tornadoes, hurricanes, fires, flooding), the Lord is Good!
- ☐ And when you have cancer, the Lord is Good!

The circumstances of our lives do not change the status of the Lord being Good! Sometimes, we allow the things of this world change our view of God when He never changed! It is what we said last week, I invite you again:

📖 *Psalm 34:8 → "O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!"*

And because He is Good, we are moved to Worship Him with Overflowing Thankfulness!

b) Because the Lord is Loving

Lovingkindness is a specific word of love that is filled with kindness. It is a covenant word to show a special relationship between God and His people. It is at the heart of God's love. If "Good" in the previous section has to do with "status", then this has to do with action. It has to do with His mercy, His Grace on His people.

David says the same thing in Psalm 101, "*I will sing of lovingkindness.*" I will sing about how good you are to us, O GOD. You are so great to us. You love us so much. You are so kind to us. You are so gracious to us. You are so loving to us. You are merciful to us. And of course, God's love for the church is the same kind of love.

📖 *John 3:16 → "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."*

📖 *Romans 5:8 → "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*

📖 *Romans 8:35,38-39 → "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword . . . For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

That is why we praise Him; that is why we thank Him; because He is not only Good, but because that Goodness has become active and visible to us, that He has so much love & mercy to us! Do you really believe that Jesus Loves You and that it is not just some lyrics of a song? Do you feel it?

c) *Because the Lord is Faithful*

God can be trusted! His Word is Truth! Titus 1:2 says that He is a God that cannot lie!

“He is no fickle being, promising and forgetting. He has entered a covenant with His people, and He will never revoke or alter what He has promised. Our parents found Him faithful, and so will our children and their descendants forever. A changeable God would be a terror to the righteous. They would have no sure anchor, and amid a changing world they would be driven to and fro in perpetual fear of shipwreck . . . Our heart leaps for joy as we bow before One who has never broken His word or changed His purpose.”⁴

Isn't that refreshing? Doesn't that help you worship?

So, how are you doing in your worship? I have to be honest, the older I get the more I desire and want to worship God, to praise Jesus in all that I do. But there are times when that gets stripped from me. There are times when I struggle in my worship. And usually when that happens, I get reminded back to the basics of worship, that worship is not about me; it is about God!

My prayer for you is that you would worship God this morning, this afternoon, and if you are moved, that someone would feel that it is okay to “Amen!” It is okay to sing loud, even if it is off key because you are not singing for the person next to you. You are singing for & to the Lord. It is glorious to serve Him with thankfulness. And that as we do these things, we are giving the Lord the worship that He deserves.

Let's pray – and then let's sing!

⁴ Spurgeon, 883.