

A THANKFUL PEOPLE
Psalm 100

Intro: Psalm 100 is one of the most familiar of all the Psalms. We do not know its background. There are no historical hints in the Psalm to give us any indication as to when it was written. It deals with a subject which identifies what is to be one of the outstanding characteristics of the Lord's people in any generation--OT or NT-- the subject of praise and thanksgiving. See vv. 1, 2, and 4.

In the NT we have verses like 1 Thess. 5:18 and Phil. 4:4.

We probably can say that Psalm 100 was written after the people of Israel were in their own land, and after the Temple was built, but even then we have to use reservations in our comments because David wrote of coming into the Lord's presence, as this Psalm does, and they were still using a temporary building in his day.

The time is not that important. It is important that the Lord's people are to come to Him, and that they are to come with thankful and rejoicing hearts. To be sure, they would come. But the concern of the Psalmist (and of the Holy Spirit) was how they would come!

Vv. 1, 2, and 4 give us six exhortations which are six ways of saying that praise, thanksgiving, and worship are to be evident in all of our dealings with God. Whatever else may be upon our hearts, we must come to Him with thanksgiving. This means that there are always reasons for us to be thankful. Even when we cannot see any immediate reason for thanking and praising the Lord, it is always good to know that He is in absolute control of our circumstances and our lives, and that His objectives are always the best.

So let us look at the exhortations--and notice that they are all imperatives. This means that we are to come to the Lord, and we are to come with praise. I understand that it was a sin in ancient times to come into the presence of an earthly king with a sad countenance. It is evident that Paul felt responsible to contribute to the joy of the saints. Cf. Phil. 1:25; 2 Cor. 2:1 ff.

I. THE EXHORTATIONS TO BE THANKFUL (Psa. 100:1, 2, 4).

As I have said, there are six of them.

Notice how the Lord is referred to in each one.

It is not for Israel alone that the exhortations are given, but for all of the peoples of the earth! The thought here is that in every land the Lord has people who know Him and need

to praise Him.

This is to be done corporately, and it is to be done individually. It is to be done continually.

It is to be done with singing. Do you know that singing and music are the special property of the people of God? We are really the only people who know the true reasons for singing.

Often when the people of Israel went to war it was with the singers leading them.

Praise and worship are not optional; they are binding upon the people of God. We all come to the Lord; the question is, How do we come?

The other two verses give us six reasons as to why we should come to the Lord, and come to Him with thanksgiving and worship:

Notice the similarity between Psalm 100 and the first 6½ verses of Psalm 95.

Now let us note and seek to understand . . .

II. THE REASONS FOR THANKING THE LORD (Psa. 100:3, 5).

A. "For He is God" (v. 3).

This is the only time the Lord is referred to as God in in the entire Psalm. Four times we have Lord mentioned. (Explain the meaning of both.)

God brings before us the idea of sovereignty. When this great and neglected truth actually becomes known to us, it will transform our attitude toward the events of our lives. We will begin to see the hand of God in everything!

God is sovereign whether we know it, and recognize it, or not. But there is the greatest joy in knowing it. "Know ye that the Lord He is God." This eternal, unchanging, faithful Lord is God!

Note what David wrote in Psa. 16:8.

This was the secret of Joseph's life. After their father died, and his brothers were fearful that now he would take revenge on them, do you remember what he said? It was this: "Fear not: for am I in the place of God?"

Let us ask the Lord daily to teach us what it means in every aspect of our lives that He is God!

B. He is our Creator (v. 3).

We would not be here if it were not for the Lord. We are not self-made people; we are made by God!

Did you ever notice, particularly in the NT, that when the apostles preached to Gentiles, that this was often the place where they started--with God as Creator?

Read through your Bible some time noting all of the references that are made to God as our Creator. There are hundreds of them!

Cf. Psalm 33.

To know that God is our Creator will cause you to build upon the truth that He is God. It will give you an understanding of His power, His wisdom, His goodness--and you will begin to relate these attributes to your own daily life and circumstances.

Cf. Isa. 40:28-31.

Along with His creative work is His sustaining work, His providence.

Think of these truths and you will soon be praising the Lord.

C. He is our Shepherd, the Shepherd of His people (v. 3).

What a precious truth this is! "The Lord is my shepherd." He knows me. He feeds me. He protects me. He guides me. Psalm 23 tells the whole story. "My cup runneth over."

How long has it been since you really gave some thought to this? Do you realize how helpless you are, and how completely you would be at the mercy of your circumstances and of other people and even of the foolishness of your own heart IF IT WERE NOT FOR YOUR Shepherd.

Cf. John 10:11; Heb. 13:20, 21; 1 Pet. 5:4.

But this is not all. Look at verse 5. Here we have three other reasons for praising the Lord continually.

Verse 5 gives us what must have been the most repeated song of OT times. See Psa. 136--verse 1, and then the refrain in each verse, leading to the last verse.

What do we have here?

D. The goodness of God (v. 5).

What do most of us believe about the goodness of the Lord in our daily lives? We believe that things are "good" when we like them, and that it is a manifestation of the goodness of the Lord when He takes away what we do not like.

But, you see, what the Psalmist was saying was that God is always good, and that whatever He does is good, and that He is incapable of doing anything else for His people but that which is good. Paul has taught us that He works all things together for good. Cf. Rom. 8:28.

Psa. 72:18, 19 gives us this word:

Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel,
who only doeth wondrous things.
And blessed be his glorious name for ever:
and let the whole earth be filled with his glory;
Amen and Amen.

E. "His mercy is everlasting" (v. 5).

Grace is for our guilty; mercy is for our miseries.

God's mercies are inexhaustible. The history of the world is a testimony to the mercy of God. But how much more evident is it in the lives of the people of God!

Cf. Psa. 103:17,

But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children.

I am a grandfather seven times over, and it causes me to praise the Lord that the mercy of the Lord is not going to be depleted at all as my grandchildren need it.

Cf. Lam. 3:22, 23a,

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning . . .

Finally,

F. "His truth endureth to all generations" (v. 5)

"Truth" here means faithfulness.

What comfort there is here! And when we learn this, it will give us a singing heart.

The Lord is faithful to Himself. He is faithful to His Word. He is faithful to His purposes. He will never fail nor betray His people.

Cf. 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Tim. 2:13.

Concl: Let me ask you two questions as I close:

1) Do you come to the Lord? The Jews had their prescribed times to come; we do not. But the Word makes it very clear that the Lord should hear from us daily--preferably in the morning, but at night also, and even throughout the day. Do you "enter"? Has He heard from you today?

My second question is this:

2) How do you come to Him? Do you come formally, with a cold, indifferent heart? Do you come with doubts and fears, or even with bitterness because you have not received from the Lord what you want? How do you come?

This 100th Psalm should be descriptive of every single one of us. And by the grace of God it can be! Let us pray that God will teach us the great truths mentioned in this Psalm that we may glorify Him by our faith, by our praise, and by the peace that we always have in our hearts!

If you do not know the Lord, then I trust that you will come to Him today. Only when you know the Lord as your God and Jesus Christ as your Saviour, can you have this peace and joy which will hold you through all of the trials and testings which all of us face throughout our lives.