

Selections from the Psalms | Joy • Lament • Jesus

03 A Psalm for Giving Thanks

June 25, 2017

I. INTRODUCTION

Have you ever been so excited that you did not know what to do with yourself. I seem to have this problem, being that I am overly expressive and always see the glass half full. Even though I am older I still act like my kids when I get overwhelmed with joy.

It is not to uncommon in our house to hear exuberant cries of joy when, for a moment, life is falling into place. We often make up songs to express our joy, or dance around a little to visibly show our joy, and at times speechless but have the biggest grin on our face you have ever seen.

This is what I envision in Psalms 100. The Psalmist is overwhelmed with the goodness of the Lord and grabs a pen and paper, or tablet and stone, and puts into words what is inside him. Probably a good response to write things down because for years and years he can read and reread the joy that God brings.

He can see how to rightly respond to a God who overwhelms with love, grace, and faithfulness; a God who gives us our identity as His own.

And what he writes, really is two fold 1) Instructions for the worshiper/proper responses for himself and 2) reasons he is worshipping and giving thanks. A great guide for us to follow as an expression of joy...so we have seen the source of our joy, we have been commanded to pursue joy, and now how to express joy.

II. INSTRUCTION TO THE WORSHIPER (1-2 / 4)

A. The instructions break down to things the worshiper does towards YHWH (1-2) and posture when he/she comes to YHWH (4)

1. Things the worshiper does

- a) Make a joyful noise to the Lord, *all the earth*
- b) Serve with gladness
- c) Give thanks
- d) Bless his name

One is to express his joy through making joyful noise—notice it does not say a great sounding noise, serving, giving thanks, and bless his name—“adore with bended knees”¹...adore his name above all other names.

It is right for the worshiper of God to express his joy, rather than be surly all the time. It is right for the worshiper to serve, put to action his joy by serving God through serving others.

2. The posture of the worshiper

- a) Come into his presence with singing...the holy God who is so holy they don't utter his name, they can come into his presences with singing!

The same God who Moses had to be hid behind a rock as not to see the fullness of God, we can sing in his presence. Its like the Presidents kid who has great joy because he can confidently walk into his Dad's office without retribution.

- b) Enter his gates and courts

¹ Brown, Francis, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs. *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.

- (1) A description of the temple, enter through the gate into the court that had lots of activity, primarily sacrifices.

III. REASONS FOR GIVING THANKS (3 / 5)

A. *Know the Lord* (YHWH)...all of these indicate that God has ultimate authority because he is God and he has established a relationship with them; therefore, making them the people of God. They found this authority, the ownership of God over them, as cause for rejoicing. Notice the text...

1. is God...has authority
2. Made us...has rights to us, has given them their identity
3. We are his
4. We are his people
5. *We are his sheep in his pasture...*we cannot over step this imagery and need to spend a little time here feeling the weight of what the Psalmist is communicating. Imagery was a way for the poet to show big truths in succinct ways.

The imagery of sheep and shepherd are ramped throughout the scriptures and a favorite to describe the relationship between God and his people, and here specifically God and Israel. This one line of poetry communicates a lot.

Sheep were not fenced in to care for themselves, but were dependent on a shepherd for protection, to led them to places to graze, to get water, find shelter and tend to injuries.

The shepherd guided, protected, was a constant companion and used their authority to do all these things. Israel was God's possession and could look to him confidently for guidance and protection.

Rooted in the sheep-shepherd relationship, the biblical imagery stresses the care and compassion of the divine shepherd and the dependence of the people on God to meet their needs.²

God's authority, his right over them was not a burden to them but a joyous thing that he gave them identity; God's people his sheep in his pasture. God's authority was considered a good gift because he functioned like a shepherd. Look how he uses his authority, he takes them/us to his pasture...

Pasture is yet another imagery full of care. The primary use of this image is pastoral care and supply. The Pasture are places of refreshment, security and satisfaction, and natural beauty.³ God has made them his possession and like sheep places them in his pasture.

God's authority is expressed through shepherding, a beautiful image worthy of thanksgiving

B. Final Reasons are based upon God's goodness

1. Lord is good
2. Steadfast love endures forever

² Leland Ryken, James C. Withour, and Tremper Longman III, eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1998) p 782-85.

³ Leland Ryken, *DBI*, p 630.

3. faithfulness to all generations...another reoccurring theme in the Psalms is that the Lord would remain faithful to all his promises.

They deeply believed that He, God, did not lie. So, therefore, he would endure through history with his love and faithfulness despite their faithfulness.

IV. HOW NOW DO WE SEE THESE THINGS

Do you ever wonder how we are to see these things from such an ancient book? How is it that in the OT Israel being considered God's people suppose to be encouraging to me? Well, it is a simple formula, Israel-Christ-Church.

What the gospels seem to do over and over again is put Christ up as the True Israel fulfilling all that Israel could not do, keeping covenant with God, and then making a new covenant. Romans, 1 Peter, even in Titus we see ethnic Israel and gentiles referred to as God's people, his possession. T

herefore through Christ we are all God's people, not based upon ethnicity but trust in Christ and repentance of sin. A great summary would be this, "*the church does not replace or absorb OT Israel; rather Israel was a type of Jesus and, derivatively, of a new and regenerate covenant community.*"⁴

Let me give you a couple of examples from our text...

- A. Gates / Courts (Matt 7:13)
- B. Sheep / Shephard (John 10)
 1. Jesus puts himself before the people as a shepherd.
The long standing belief was that God was their

⁴ Brent E. Parker, "Israel-Christ-Church Relationship" in *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course Between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies*, Stephen J. Vellum and Brent E. park eds. (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2016) p. 68.

shepherd and now here Jesus, who is God, is standing in front of them using his authority to act like a shepherd, who as the text says, will lay down his life for his sheep. In verse 18, he states it clearly by saying, “...*I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.*”

Jesus, the God-man, is acting like a shepherd for his people, his sheep. Who are the sheep here? (9:35 / 10:25) Well, it is those who believe, not ethnically driven. So sheep are those who believe in Jesus. Matter of fact, Jesus tells a few people that are ethnically from Israel in John 10:25-26 that they do not believe because they are not his sheep.

A staggering claim especially considering Psalm 100, but that is where the entire storyline of the bible has been heading; Jesus is God remaining faithful to his covenant by laying down his own life for his sheep. So being God’s sheep is believing in Jesus and coming underneath his sacrifice and authority, not ethnicity, wealth, pedigree, intellect, nothing but faith in Jesus and repenting to come underneath his authority. So brothers and sisters we can read Psalms 100 and hear those words spoken to us as well.

C. Faithfulness to all generations (Lk 1:50)

1. Mary is told she would bear a son whom she is to call Jesus and he would be great and will be called the Son of the Most High and God will give him the throne of David, which is for another sermon but deeply rooted in OT and foreshadowed Jesus.

What we are interested in this morning is her response recorded in Luke 1:46-55. She sees this miraculous pregnancy as God's faithfulness to his promises.

Luke 1:50 and 54 are echoes of the deep belief we saw in Ps 100:5, that God would be faithful from generation to generation! She believed Jesus was the long awaited King who could stand for God's people.

From this point forward the NT writers begin to attribute all the names and understanding of God's people in the OT to God's people in the NT, Jews and Gentiles alike (1 Peter 2:9). The faithfulness of God to Israel is seen in Jesus and is extended to the church, God's people!

V. THEREFORE...

- A. If this a proper guide to express thanksgiving, then practice it this week. Participate in personal and family worship.
 1. Read Scripture to see all the reasons you have to rejoice
 2. Sing a Song to make a joyful noise
 3. Pray to express your thanks to God

Research⁵ shows that thankful people generally feel better, have more friends, sleep better, feel more empathy and reduces aggression—which is exactly what Paul said in Phil 2:14-18, and have more mental strength. So, a simple thing of being

⁵ A quick google search yields multiple articles speaking of the benefits of thankfulness. Forbes magazine did an article titled, "[7 Scientifically Proven Benefits of Gratitude That Will Motivate You to Give Thanks Year-Round.](#)" Time magazine jumped onto the thankfulness bandwagon and agreed that gratitude is beneficial. Harvard Health published an article title "[In Praise of Gratitude](#)" revealing the exact same things.

grateful prevents spiraling down into self-loathing, lashing out against others, and a general healthier life. We as Christians have much to be thankful for!!

- B. God's authority is for our good. He used it to lay down his life so we could stand up. His authority is used to guide, direct, protect, care, led to water and give refreshment. We must obey Him! Let his authority be greater than your own!
- C. Believers, rejoice we are sheep in the Lord's pasture. We are cared for and loved beyond measure by the Great Shepherd who endures his love towards us!
- D. Non-believers in the room...you might want to consider the claims of scriptures. I wonder how you make sense of the connections between the entire bible, which points towards Jesus.

Mary, who was told her life would be forever changed and perhaps difficult, rejoiced because God's faithfulness was happening, and don't miss this, in Jesus! You know the scripture carries the sheep imagery a little further and states in Matthew 25:32 that God will, *...gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.*

This is describing the final judgment that those who trusted the great shepherd, who laid down his life, and followed him are his sheep...but those who did not and rejected him as the great shepherd who used his authority to lay down his life, are not his sheep.