

Psalm 100 (DHT)

- ¹ A Psalm of Thanks Offering;
Shout triumphantly to YHWH, all the earth.
- ² Worship YHWH joyfully;
Come before his face with singing-lips.
- ³ Know that YHWH is God;
He has made us;
We are his people,
The flock of his pasture.
- ⁴ Come to his gate with a thanks offering;
To his court with praise;
Confess thanks to him and bless his name.
- ⁵ For YHWH is good;
His covenant-faithfulness is everlasting;
His faithfulness for all generations.

Big Idea and Formational Questions:

The love of God was showcased in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Never-ending praise is due to God because salvation has come to God’s priestly people from his royal throne, on which the Risen Messiah now reigns as King.

Does the love of God prompt you into a posture of praise?

Does the love of God compel you to go and tell those who do not yet know?

In Response to Psalm 99 with Some Help from Isaiah 6

The fear of the Lord is the awestruck or trembling wonder at God’s greatness. Several months ago, Pastor Nick spoke to us from Psalm 99, a psalm chiefly about the awestruck or trembling wonder at God’s greatness. *YHWH reigns; let the peoples tremble; He sits enthroned between the cherubim; let the earth quake*, v. 1 says. Psalm 99 goes on to name Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, three priests among the Israelite priests who were called to worship and guard the sacredness of the temple, the meeting place of heaven and earth, the throne of YHWH. These three men, among the rest of the priests, were at their core sinners unworthy of being in the presence of God.

We like to ignore this reality: that as sinners we are unworthy of standing in the presence of sheer and utter holiness. And yet these priests—and we as well—are called to enter the most Holy Place; to approach the throne of God. A classic example of this is when Isaiah finds himself transported into the cosmic temple of YHWH. Isaiah sees the train of YHWH’s robe fill the temple

space, a prophetic illustration of how the glory of YHWH must fill all creation, and Isaiah hears the angels crying out to one another of the absolute holiness of YHWH: *Holy, Holy, Holy is YHWH of Hosts; his glory fills all the earth* (Isa. 6:3, DHT). What is he doing there!? He doesn't belong there! Even Isaiah himself is aware that he does not belong in that room. For in response to the wondrous *trisagion*¹ of the angels and in response to the trembling wonder at the reverberations of the temple walls, Isaiah cries out: *Woe to me, for I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a nation of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the King, YHWH of Hosts!* (Isa. 6:5, DHT). How can Isaiah, an unholy sinner, remain in the presence of the holiness of God? Isaiah tells that one of the angels flew to him holding a burning coal from the altar—the result of a sacrifice—and touched the source of Isaiah's particular sin, transforming him from one whose lips spoke profanity to lips that spoke the very Word of God. And after burning the sin out of him, the angel says: *Behold! This has touched your lips; he—referring to YHWH of Hosts—he has removed your guilt, and atoned for your sin* (Isa. 6:7). How can an unholy sinner enter the presence of God and not perish? *Only* by the forgiveness of God can anyone approach the throne and not be consumed by the righteous wrath of God. What does the forgiveness of Isaiah result in? Isaiah hears the voice of YHWH asking who he should send and without any hesitation the newly forgiven prophet Isaiah exclaims: *Here I am! Send me!* (Isa. 6:8, DHT). The rest of the Book of Isaiah gives some of the clearest prophecies about how unholy sinners will be forgiven by God.

Back to Psalm 99, how could Moses, Aaron, and Samuel worship and guard God's holy temple space without being consumed by God's burning wrath? Only by the forgiveness of God. This is exactly what Psalm 99:8 tells us about these three: *O YHWH our God, you answered them—referring to Moses, Aaron, Samuel, and the other priests too—you were a forgiving God to them, but an avenger of their wrongdoings*. And in light of the person and work of God revealed in v. 8, to what immediate response does v. 9 call us? Verse 9 calls us to *Exalt YHWH our God and worship at his holy mountain; for YHWH our God is holy!* The phrase “holy mountain” refers to the concept in Biblical Theology of the ‘Cosmic Temple’ which was always atop a sacred mountain. So, for example, even though Gen. 1-3 don't mention anything about a mountain, Ezekiel 28 tells us God's sanctuary in Eden was atop the mountain of God. In subsequent Israelite history, the idea of the cosmic temple-mountain was used to designate Mount Horeb, Mount Sinai, Jerusalem, and Zion as the place of God's temple residence.

¹ *Trisagion* means “Thrice Holy” in Greek, and is the name of the “Holy, Holy, Holy” hymns of Scripture and history.

From Psalm 99:1, God reigns between the cherubim, which is in the Most Holy Place of the Temple, and from Psalm 99:9, this temple from which God reigns is atop the holy mountain of God. This cosmic temple is where the psalmist calls on us to exalt YHWH our holy God *because* he has forgiven us of our sins. Just like the example of Isaiah, the psalmist tells us in Psalm 99 that being forgiven by God ought to drive us immediately into a posture of praise. Does the love of God prompt you into a posture of praise?

Psalm 100 is therefore the response to the forgiveness of God told in Psalm 99. The not-yet-forgiven peoples trembled before God in Psalm 99, but in Psalm 100 the psalmist calls on those who have been forgiven to make joyful noises to YHWH. The earth quaked before God in Psalm 99, but in Psalm 100 the psalmist tells us that *all the earth* joins the peoples who have been forgiven in making beautiful noises to YHWH. Why would the earth quake before God but then join in joyful noise? Because the earth was subjected to a curse as a result of the Fall. Paul tells us in Romans that the whole earth longs for the renewal of all things. The reversal of the curse extends beyond just sinful man; *all of creation* has begun to be and will be made new.

The central jobs of priests in the OT were to serve and guard—these are the two jobs given to Adam and Eve in the garden; two jobs that when used together refer *only* to the work of priests. Priests are to serve or worship and guard or obey. The not-yet-forgiven priests of the OT would do these tasks with great fear—not the fear of the Lord as in the awestruck or trembling wonder of God’s greatness—but fear, for if they didn’t follow every jot and tittle perfectly, or in other words if his sins hadn’t been properly dealt with, then the high priest would be killed when he entered the sanctuary and the nation would remain unatoned. Priests served and guarded with great fear. But priests whose sins *had* been properly dealt with; priests whose sins *had* been forgiven could do their priestly tasks not cowardly or fearfully, but rather as Psalm 100 puts it: *with gladness and singing!* To enter with gladness and singing is reflective of the boldness with which the assurance of forgiveness gives to those who have been forgiven.

The Holiness of God is important for us to remember; we don’t like to remember it, because like Isaiah and all the priests who faced the task of standing before the presence of God, to consider and think about the holiness of God forces us to remember that we are unholy; unworthy; ruined and undone. Holy is who God is, but holy is not *all* God is. Because God is a forgiving God, we can come to know him by not just his holiness, but also his goodness; his compassion; his care for us; and his commitment to us. *Know that YHWH is God! It is he who made us; we are his people,*

the sheep of his pasture. Though he would be just in doing so, God did not make us only to abandon us in our rebellion against him. God made us to be his people. God made a way for unholy sinners to be able not just to come before the holy presence of God, but to do so boldly, joyfully, gladly, and worshipfully, and this way God made is forgiveness. God’s forgiveness forgives us of our sin—yes—but it does more than that; it restores our identity and makes us able to proclaim: YHWH, you are our God and we are your people, the sheep who are guided to the green pastures and beside the still waters that we heard about last week from Psalm 23. Does the love of God compel you to go and tell those who do not yet know?

We are the sheep; we are *his* sheep. Centuries before there was a baby Jesus, Isaiah prophesied that the messianic servant of YHWH would be formed in the womb for the specific purpose of gathering not just Israel to God but the whole world. God speaks to the Messiah in Isa. 49:6, saying: *It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.* Jesus says in Matt. 15 that he was sent to gather the lost sheep of the House of Israel, and then in John 10 Jesus says that he came to lay down his life for the sheep, the sheep of Israel and sheep that are not yet part of Israel. He’s also speaking about the Gentiles who will be uniting in him. *I must bring them also,* Jesus says, *so there will be one flock.* We are the sheep; we are *his* sheep who through the way of forgiveness he has rescued from sin and damnation. Does the love of God compel you to go and tell those who do not yet know?

Joyfulness, gladness, worshipfulness—all of these responses that Psalm 100 calls us to do flow from the decisive act of forgiveness we are told of in Psalm 99. Those whose identity has been restored to nothing more than “a forgiven one,” can do nothing *but* praise and worship the God who gave them their new forgiven identity. These are the ones who do not enter under fearful precepts but with joyful noises; who enter the gates of the temple with thanksgiving and praise; a thanks and praise that bless God. We often think of and hear about how God has blessed us, but we are to bless God. We are to bless God by calling upon his name for to call on the name of the Lord is to submit yourself under the authority and power of the Lord. Does the love of God prompt you into a posture of praise?

There is also an aspect of forgiveness that can be easy for us to overlook. The character of God and the results of his work are *permanent*. God’s steadfast-love or his covenant-faithfulness endures forever, and it the covenant-faithfulness of God from which the forgiveness and grace of

God flows to his people. To be forgiven by the Holy God is to taste and see the goodness of God, goodness that never ends; a steadfast-love or covenant-faithfulness and a reliable commitment to his forgiven flock that endures forever. Once you have been forgiven by God, you *are* forgiven. Jesus said in John 6 that the will of God the Father was that Jesus would lose none of those whom the Father chose to forgive. The character of God is permanent, and the work of God is permanent as well; it cannot be undone. It is the character and work of God by which every song of forgiveness that we sing flows; by which every song of grace and mercy that we sing pours forth. Psalm 101 continues, *I will sing of the steadfast love of God and make music to him who is the source of all that is blameless* (Ps. 101:1-2a, paraphrase). The forgiveness of God leads us to know the goodness and love of God. The forgiveness of God leads us to a response; to be forgiven is to be called into a posture of praise that never ends. Does the love of God prompt you into a posture of praise?

The Road to Emmaus

In the midst of our rebellion, rather than justly leave us condemned to eternal wrath, to bridge the chasm that lay between us, God came down the ladder from heaven; he stepped down from glory to wear our sin and bear our shame to declare to us by the Word of the Cross that we are forgiven.² It is this perfect life of Jesus, the God-Man, who is the perfect mediator between unholy man and the holy God. It is this Jesus who went to the Cross, bearing upon himself the full weight of God’s wrath, something we could never stomach. Every nail hammered into his flesh, every drop of blood his flowing wounds supplied, every splinter of wood stained crimson red, every bead of sweat on his brow, every cry of anguish to onlookers mocking and maligning what they knew not; every breath that heaved out of his nostrils until his lungs were emptied—all of this was necessary to *forgive* your sins; sins that would otherwise preclude you from entering the gates and courts of the cosmic temple and standing before the Holy God. Jesus took on flesh and went to death for you to showcase for you and all the world the permanence of the love of God.

But death was not the end of the story for the Messiah. For two days later, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead declaring victory over death and proving that he is who he and the Scriptures claimed him to be. And now it is placed before us and all of humanity: Do you believe that Jesus is the Messiah? Do you believe he was raised from the dead? Do you call on the name of Jesus, or in other words, do you submit your life to Jesus as Lord? This is the call issued from

² Some of this comes from lyrics to “Living Hope” by Phil Wickham. “Word of the Cross” from 1 Cor. 1:18.

the cross and empty tomb of Jesus, that forgiveness of sins would flow like a river of life throughout all the world to all who will receive it by faith and submit themselves humbly to Jesus as Lord. The work of God at the cross and empty tomb of Jesus showcases the character of God. The cross and empty tomb show us (1) that God’s holiness must be taken seriously; (2) that forgiveness and relational restoration for unholy sinners is possible because of the gracious and merciful forgiveness of God; and (3) that the love and covenant-faithfulness of God are reliably permanent for his forgiven people. Does the love of God prompt you into a posture of praise?

It is so easy for us to forget the resurrection of Jesus; it’s so easy to stop short at the cross. The resurrection of Jesus the Messiah *is* the Gospel precisely; the resurrection is the content of which we must spread throughout the world. Paul tells us in Romans and 1 Corinthians that without the resurrection, there is no forgiveness of sins because without the resurrection the cross was meaningless. Without the resurrection, Jesus was merely a rabbi. We mustn’t stop short of the resurrection; we mustn’t put all our eggs in the death basket. This is the problem that faced the two disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24.

When these two disciples were walking the seven-mile journey, unbeknownst to them, Jesus approached them and asked what they were talking about. “Are you the only one who doesn’t know?!” they asked. “The man we thought was the Messiah was just killed.” Everything on that journey was discouraging to them for they had lost sight of what Jesus and the Scriptures told them. Despite the fact that the Messiah had risen from the dead; despite the fact that they had heard Jesus had risen from the dead, they could not get past their immediate disappointment that their would-be savior had died instead of ushering in a glorious political uprising against Rome. On the road to Emmaus, these disciples were lost in distress and in a most compassionate way, Jesus got them through their grief by simply telling them the truth. Their doubt clouded their vision; they could not see that the Author of Life was standing before them. But they could listen, so Jesus gave them a lesson in OT messianic prophecy, which left their hearts eager for more.

As they approached the village of Emmaus, Jesus seemed as if he was continuing on, and they *urged him strongly* because of the late hour, so *Jesus went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took the bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.* Then he mysteriously disappeared. “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” *And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were*

with them gathered together, saying ‘The Lord has risen indeed!’ Then Jesus appeared to the eleven and all those gathered with them, and while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, ‘Have you anything to eat?’ And then Jesus gave those who were gathered a Bible study unlike any other, a Bible study whose central aim was to show from all three sections of the HB that the Messiah had to suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.³ This was a Bible study that apparently lasted several weeks until his ascension. And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God.

These disciples heard the news that Jesus was raised from the dead, but they did not believe it. We *had* hoped he was the one, plus today is the third day; nothing has happened. The disciples told the disguised Jesus that some women reported the events of the tomb and some of the other disciples went and saw it just as the women had said, except that Jesus was not there. This was their disbelief.⁴ We *had* hoped, but it hasn’t happened. Some women told us he was raised from the dead, but where is he? The irony, of course, is that he’s right in front of them. Despite following Jesus for however long they had, their disappointment and hopelessness boiled down to the fact that they did not yet believe in the resurrection, because the resurrection is the center of our hope; the center of our assurance of forgiveness; the center of our identity; the center of our very life; the only basis upon which we can approach death with any boldness for because of the resurrection of Jesus we who believe in his resurrection and surrender ourselves to him will be raised *just as he was*. We will be raised into bodies that are perfectly holy and whole; we will live life as it was supposed to be.

The resurrection is the basis of it all, and once Jesus revealed himself to the two disciples—once they actually believed that he was raised from the dead—their entire worlds turned upside down. Another piece of irony from the Emmaus story is that the two disciples urged the unknown Jesus to stay with them because it would have been dangerous for him to wander about at such an hour. And yet, shortly thereafter, when Jesus reveals himself to them in the breaking of bread, these two disciples leave *that very hour* to return to Jerusalem. They just walked seven miles and turned in for the night because of the dangers of the path, yet once they believed that Jesus had

³ For more on this, see my message, “According to the Scriptures.”

⁴ I make this inference of “doubt” and “disbelief” from Luke 24:21-24.

truly risen from the dead, these dangers no longer matted. They ran back to Jerusalem, seven miles in the middle of the night, because the joy in their hearts could not be contained. They *had* to go and tell. Does the love of God compel you to go and tell those who do not yet know?

When the disciples were all gathered together, hearing the testimony of the fourteen-mile roundtrip to Emmaus, Jesus appeared again. *He showed them his hands and his feet and they disbelieved for joy and were marveling.* Now, I don't take this phrase “disbelieved for joy” to refer to the initial doubt of the two on the road to Emmaus. They all are seeing Jesus before their eyes; this isn't a doubting disbelief; this is an awestruck or trembling wonder at the greatness of God that showed itself decisively in the resurrection. They could see with their eyes, but they couldn't believe what they were seeing—it was simply too wonderful to be true. This disbelief was not marked by doubt, but by joy. Overjoyed to the max, *how could this be?* they must have asked. And then a few weeks later after watching Jesus ascend bodily into the clouds, the disciples *worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple blessing God.* Obviously, by then they could believe their eyes, yet their initial amazement or marveling at the reality that Jesus was raised from the dead—this amazement or marveling did not fade. They remained overjoyed at the reality that the Messiah really came; the Messiah really died; and the Messiah really rose from the dead, according to the Scriptures. The reality of who God is and the work of God in the death and resurrection of Jesus, which secured forgiveness for the flock of God—this forgiveness that they and we are commissioned to make known throughout all the earth. Does the love of God compel you to go and tell those who do not yet know? The disciples worshipped Jesus and blessed God in the temple, where they were able to be without fear, without suspicion that their unholy, sinful selves would be struck dead, for they had been *forgiven* by God. They could do nothing but worship and bless the Lord. Does the love of God also prompt you into a posture of praise?

Conclusion – Go and Tell Forever (cf. John 21:25)

This week we begin our annual Emmaus group tradition. In this six-week ‘gather and eat’ season, we remember the story of Emmaus. The story of Emmaus reflects the reality taught in Psalms 99-100, that being forgiven by God prompts us into a posture of praise; that the forgiveness of God is the only way that we, unholy sinners can approach the most holy God. God has made a way for us to come back to him and when we come what can we do other than lift thanks and

praise for the grace it is to even be there before his throne in the cosmic temple. This is our task as God’s people; to be a people of praise.

Once Isaiah was assured of his forgiveness, he could not help himself but volunteer unhesitatingly to tell others of God’s plan of forgiveness. The woman from Samaria who came to know Jesus as the Messiah could not help herself but preach the Gospel to her community. The women who first went to the tomb and witnessed the resurrected Jesus; once they had come to know that Jesus is risen, they could not help themselves but go and tell others of the glorious news. The two disciples who Jesus revealed himself to could not help themselves but go and tell the glorious news of the resurrection to others. The large gathering of disciples who saw Jesus appear in a locked room and eat food could not help themselves but go and tell the glorious news of the resurrection to others. This is our task too. We are to praise God for his forgiveness and we are to make his forgiveness known that the choir of God’s glory would fill all the earth with the song: *Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty who was and is and is to come* (Rev. 4:8).

The last verse of John’s Gospel tells us that beyond what is recorded in Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John, *there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.* We could take a nihilistic approach to this verse and say that since all that Jesus has done cannot be contained, why try? But that’s not the response to which Psalm 100 calls us. One who has been forgiven cannot help but tell others so they may know the power of the love of God; and one who has been forgiven cannot help but praise the God who has forgiven them, and this praise is permanent. When when we’ve been there ten thousand years, we still will have no less days to sing God’s praise than the hour we first begun. Singing praises is the forever vocation of God’s people; for all eternity we will sing together. We will not sing in monotone, but rather in reflection of the diversity of God’s people, we will sing with one harmonious voice.

Psalm 100 is perhaps the most sung psalm. The Doxology, which is also called “The Old Hundredth” is based on Psalm 100. I thought it would be fitting to close this message with all of us singing *harmoniously* the Doxology. Will you join me?

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him all creatures here below;
Praise him above ye heavenly hosts;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, amen.