

The background features a repeating pattern of organic, watercolor-style shapes in three colors: a deep navy blue, a warm terracotta brown, and a soft, dusty rose pink. The shapes are scattered across the white background, creating a textured and artistic feel. A white rectangular box is centered horizontally, containing the title text.

D W E L L I N G
WITH GOD IN WORSHIP

Getting Started

Overview of the Week:

Our theme for the week is dwelling with God in worship. The Bible teaches that worship is both internally and externally expressed, meaning that worship first begins in the heart and must be in the heart prior to externally expressing and living out the worship that develops within. In John 4:23-24, Jesus explains that true worshippers will worship Him in both spirit and truth; these are the two key attributes of genuine worship. John Piper explains, "Right worship, good worship, pleasing worship depends on a right mental grasp of the way God really is. Worship depends on a right spiritual or emotional or affectional heart-grasp of God's supreme value." Our goal for the week is to observe what worship looks like in the psalms, focusing on psalms of praise and thanksgiving, in order to properly prepare our hearts to worship God in both spirit and truth.

How Do I Prepare?

This week, we're going to look at several psalms that feature the theme/idea of worship. We will study Psalm 150, 107, and 100 this week. As always, on day 5, you will have the opportunity to reflect on the studies of the week and choose one of those passages to dig into more deeply for self and communal application.

Memory Verse of the Week:

“Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble” (Psalm 107:1-2).

On the next page, write or “Scripture doodle” your memory verse.

Prayer of the Week:

On the next page, write out a prayer to the Lord, praising Him for revealing Himself to us and showing us His glory. Use Psalm 96 to guide you as you write this prayer.

Songs of the Week:

“I Will Be Undignified,” Rend Collective; “You are Good,” Israel Houghton; “Glorious Day” Passion; “Again I Say Rejoice,” Israel & New Breed

Link to playlist: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3BEh5j9yeffglo4EbmVrQW>

Week Eight Memory Verse:

Week Eight Prayer:

Day One: Worship God with Exuberant Praise

1. Pray

Before we begin reading and examining God's Word, let's ask the Lord to lead us in the study of His Word.

2. Examine

As we begin our study of worshipping God, we'll start by taking a look at Psalm 150. Read Psalm 150 in its entirety.

¹ Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens!
² Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his excellent greatness!

³ Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!

⁴ Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!

⁵ Praise him with sounding cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD!

The Context:

Psalm 150 is the final psalm in the psalter and serves as the doxology for both the fifth book of psalms as well as the entire psalter. This psalm is an expression of pure praise to God, containing no direct doctrinal teaching, no rebukes, no prayers of supplication -- only praise to God, for He is worthy.

Scottish minister Alexander Maclaren says of Psalm 150: "The psalm is more than an artistic close of the Psalter: it is a prophecy of the last result of the devout life, and, in its unclouded sunniness, as well as in its universality, it proclaims the certain end of the weary years for the individual and for the world." What a beautiful statement! Our ultimate end, both in life as well in death, should result in the worship of God.

This psalm focuses on the limitless reasons and ways to praise the Lord our God. In verse 1, the psalmist begins by calling us to praise God both in his sanctuary and also in his heavens. The psalmist uses a merism here, a Hebrew poetic device, to express that there is no place in which God should not be praised. A merism is an abbreviated list that generally contains two extremes that are used to imply the whole. The psalmist uses another merism in verse 2 to show that in addition to God deserving praise in every place, He deserves to be praised for every reason.

Verses 3-5 then list numerous instruments that can be used to praise the Lord, showing that praising God in song is a primary expression and expectation. Note the assortment and type of instruments used. These are instruments of triumph and joy. They are generally loud instruments, and even clanging cymbals are included. These verses should show the enthusiasm and excitement with which we should praise the Lord. Our praise is to be exuberant!

Verse 6 tells us who should praise the Lord. And the answer is everyone! Everyone who has breath should praise the Lord. If we are breathing, we ought to be giving praise to the Lord. This is why the apostle Paul tells believers in 1 Thessalonians 5:16 to "rejoice continually" (ESV). There is not a person, not a time, not a place who, when, and where it is not appropriate to lift up praise to the Almighty God! He deserves our praise now and forevermore, and He deserves to be praised exuberantly!

Your Turn to Dig In

1. Note the type of verb that begins each verse of this psalm. Each of these verbs (both “praise” and “let”) is an action verb. They require action to be taken on our part. Furthermore, they are imperatives, or commands. God is not suggesting that we praise Him; he is commanding this. How does this inform your idea of worship?

2. Read verses 3-5. Then, close your eyes and meditate on what this praise to God could sound like. Describe the sounds below.

3. Read verse 4. In this verse, there is one non-audible part of worship described. What is it? Why do you think this act is included in worship to God?

4. Reflect on Alexander Maclaren's statement that this psalm exemplifies what the end of the believer's life will look like, the coming into the world of heaven full of praise. How does this shape your view of death for the believer?

Reflection and Application

Our God is worthy of praise, more worthy than any other. He deserves a constant outpouring of praise. What he deserves, though, we could never give. It is not possible for us to praise Him often enough, loudly enough, or expressively enough. So, oh how wonderful it is that although God fully deserves our praise, He does not need it. He is not lacking in any way if He doesn't receive it, but it does bring Him joy when we do praise Him. And what a beautiful picture! We are able to bring joy to the God of the universe by praising His Holy Name. When He has done so much for us, can't we spare a moment (or many moments!!) to praise Him in the way He deserves?

1. Reflect on what excites you. What can make you shout for joy or squeal? Is it finding out you're going to be a mother, a grandmother, an aunt? Is it finding out you have gotten a new job or new promotion? How about that you, a dear friend, or perhaps your son or daughter is going to be getting married? What about seeing an old friend or loved one you haven't seen in ages? All of these are reasons for excitement! Now, reflect on what it looks like when you experience this excitement. What physical reaction do you have? What feelings fill up inside you? Now compare that experience with how you react to the mighty works of God and to being in His presence in worship. How are the experiences different? How are they the same?

2. Have you ever been in a worship service and felt your love for God overflowing from your soul and wanted to praise Him more expressively but felt ashamed to do so? Perhaps this is just me who has felt this way, and if so, feel free to move on from this question. But just in case I'm not alone here, why do you think we sometimes feel this way? Is it because we are afraid to be judged? Because no one else is expressing themselves in an outward way? And do we perhaps feel wary of this judgement because we ourselves have judged others for their outward expressions in the past? Regardless of why we (or perhaps just I) have experienced this, is there ever a reason to quench the Holy Spirit's moving in us to express our praise to God? How can we grow in our love for Him so that it outweighs the hesitations within us and the potential (but unlikely and genuinely insignificant) judgments of our fellow man?

For Further Reading

Holy Roar, Chris Tomlin and Darren Whitehead, 2019.

This book defines and explains various Hebrew words found to express praise in the Old Testament, namely in the Psalms. Tomlin and Whitehead talk about how to praise God more expressively. Tomlin also gives a behind-the-scenes look at the writing of some of the most well known praise songs of the 21st century.

Day Two: Worship God with a Thankful Heart, Part One

1. Pray

Before we begin reading and examining God's Word, let's ask the Lord to lead us in the study of His Word.

2. Examine

As we continue dwelling with God in worship, we'll turn to Psalm 107. Read this psalm in its entirety before moving on. We will look at an overview of the psalm today with a closer look at verses 1-22. Tomorrow, we'll return this psalm and look more closely at the remainder of it.

¹ Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever!

² Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,
whom he has redeemed from trouble

³ and gathered in from the lands,
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.

⁴ Some wandered in desert wastes,
finding no way to a city to dwell in;

⁵ hungry and thirsty,
their soul fainted within them.

⁶ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.

⁷ He led them by a straight way
till they reached a city to dwell in.

⁸ Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wondrous works to the children of man!

⁹ For he satisfies the longing soul,
and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

¹⁰ Some sat in darkness and in the shadow
of death, prisoners in affliction and in irons,

¹¹ for they had rebelled against the words
of God, and spurned the counsel of the
Most High.

¹² So he bowed their hearts down with hard
labor; they fell down, with none to help.

³ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.

¹⁴ He brought them out of darkness and the
shadow of death, and burst their bonds apart.

¹⁵ Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast
love, for his wondrous works to the children
of man!

¹⁶ For he shatters the doors of bronze and
cuts in two the bars of iron.

¹⁷ Some were fools through their sinful ways,
and because of their iniquities suffered affliction;
¹⁸ they loathed any kind of food, and they drew
near to the gates of death.

¹⁹ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.

²⁰ He sent out his word and healed them,
and delivered them from their destruction.

²¹ Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast
love, for his wondrous works to the children
of man!

²² And let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving,
and tell of his deeds in songs of joy!

²³ Some went down to the sea in ships,
doing business on the great waters;

²⁴ they saw the deeds of the LORD,
his wondrous works in the deep.

²⁵ For he commanded and raised the stormy
wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea.

²⁶ They mounted up to heaven;
they went down to the depths;
their courage melted away in their evil light;

²⁷ they reeled and staggered like drunken
men and were at their wits' end.

²⁸ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.

²⁹ He made the storm be still, and the waves
of the sea were hushed.

³⁰ Then they were glad that the waters
were quiet, and he brought them to their
desired haven.

³¹ Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wondrous works to the children of man!

³² Let them extol him in the congregation
of the people, and praise him in the assembly
of the elders.

³³ He turns rivers into a desert,
springs of water into thirsty ground,

³⁴ a fruitful land into a salty waste,
because of the evil of its inhabitants.

³⁵ He turns a desert into pools of water,
a parched land into springs of water.

³⁶ And there he lets the hungry dwell,
and they establish a city to live in;

³⁷ they sow fields and plant vineyards and
get a fruitful yield.

³⁸ By his blessing they multiply greatly,
and he does not let their livestock diminish.

³⁹ When they are diminished and brought low
through oppression, evil, and sorrow,

⁴⁰ he pours contempt on princes and
makes them wander in trackless wastes;

⁴¹ but he raises up the needy out of affliction
and makes their families like flocks.

⁴² The upright see it and are glad,
and all wickedness shuts its mouth.

⁴³ Whoever is wise, let him attend to these
things; let them consider the steadfast love
of the LORD. (ESV)

The Context:

Psalms 107 is not attributed to a particular author or occasion, though some believe it was written while on return from exile based on verses 2 and 3. The psalm, focusing on Israel's redemptive history, reminds believers of the importance of giving thanks to God not only in private prayer but publicly, as well.

The psalmist begins the psalm by exclaiming that God is good: "Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!" (ESV). The psalmist is overcome with thankfulness for God's eternal mercy: a mercy that had no beginning, continues in the present time, and has no end. The psalmist is not content to rejoice in God's mercy alone, though. He wants others to join Him in giving God the praise and thanksgiving He deserves. So, he invites the people of God to join him in this praise. He specifically calls on the "redeemed," those whom God has called from death to life. The psalmist is urging all of us who are saved by God to thank Him first for our salvation and then for all the other wonderful grace, mercy, and gifts he has bestowed upon us. This underlying theme of thankfulness for redemption echoes in every stanza of the psalm.

After this invitation, the psalmist begins the body of the hymn in verse 4. Here, the psalmist goes on to recall stories from Israel's redemptive history in which God's mercies and redemption have been clearly on display. Verses 4-9 highlight God's deliverance of those in the wilderness; verses 10-16 tell of deliverance of those in captivity; verses 17-22 tell of God's deliverance of those who were sick, nearing death; and verses 23-32 display God's deliverance of those sailing on stormy seas. Following these descriptions of deliverance, the psalmist showcases God's mercy in his transforming the earth for His purposes in verses 33-38. He then illustrates God's mercy in the way He transforms the lives of the oppressed and afflicted. The psalmist closes the psalm by pointing out that the wise are those who can see God's acts and understand the mercies and lovingkindness found in them (outline from David Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary*).

3. What does God's response to those in distress tell us about God's character?

4. The psalmist begins by focusing on the eternal nature of God's mercy and lovingkindness. What encouragement do you, then, receive based on God's actions and character in the past? What effect does recalling God's past faithfulness have on your future?

Reflection and Application

Thanksgiving, whether public or private, is an act of worship before the Lord. Coming to God with a thankful heart helps us enter His special presence so that we can commune with Him intimately. God loves to hear the thanks of His children, just as all of us love to be thanked for something we have done. I hope that today's look at Psalm 107 has encouraged you to open up and be more thankful to God not only in private prayer but also before others. Declare the goodness that God has done for you, especially declaring the greatest goodness: His sending Christ the Messiah to save us from our sins.

1. Are you among the redeemed? If so, you need to tell your story! How did God draw you to Himself? Take some time and write down your story of redemption. If you have not yet decided to follow Christ, write down how you have seen God change the life of another person you know. If you don't know, call one of the ladies in your group and ask her to share her story with you. My story is written down below, as well.

2. Which of the stories in the first three major stanzas impacted you the most? Why? Have you ever had a similar experience to one that was mentioned here, whether literally or figuratively?

For Further Reading

Here's my testimony of how God redeemed my life:

I grew up in a small town in SC. My parents brought me to church every week and led me in the ways of God. I loved going to church and participating in the activities. I got to go and learn awesome stories, sing songs, and play with tons of other kids. What wouldn't I like about it? Following "the rules" of Christianity were not all that difficult as at that time, they mostly meant obeying my parents, and as a person who eagerly seeks the approval of others, this came almost naturally. So it was difficult for me to see my need for a Savior. I knew, though, that I needed to walk the aisle and be baptized in order to please those around me and in order to go to heaven. I certainly didn't like the idea of the alternative, and I loved things of the church, so when I was 7, I walked the aisle, professed faith in Christ, and was baptized.

My family went through a significant change when I was 12: my dad, who had only recently converted to Christianity, became a pastor. This was exciting to me because it brought an entirely new set of friends into my life – something I'm always excited for. As has been true for most of my life, I jumped right in with these new people and began making friends and began doing whatever it was they were doing in order to keep them. Many of the people I was hanging out with were older, and doing what teenagers do, especially in small towns. So, I got involved in drinking and partying. I'd go out and then feel bad about it and ask for forgiveness, not do it anymore for awhile and then do it again. I was back and forth and back and forth and back and forth. I'd still go to church and was extremely involved in the youth group, actually being a leader in it. My family and church group definitely still saw me as the "good, little church girl." This continued all the way through high school.

Between my junior and senior year of high school, I took a look at my hypocritical life and realized something was probably wrong. So, while at summer camp, I prayed "the prayer" again. This time, I decided I would try even harder to live my life right. That lasted about 9 months. So, I did what any good Christian pastor's daughter would do: I enrolled in a Southern Baptist College and joined a ministry team.

Attending a Christian college was life changing and eye opening. It changed all that I knew about Christianity. Never before had I experienced people my age who truly loved God and truly wanted to do His work and follow Him. I was in awe of the people around me and began seeking Him wholeheartedly. I would look to those around me and see what they were doing and try to do the same things. I prayed; I read my Bible; I attended Bible studies; I led Bible studies; I wrote Bible studies. I went on missions trips, ministry retreats, even led a youth group. All of my outward actions pointed towards my being a Christian, but my heart wasn't fully committed.

Throughout all of these times, I fully understood the gospel — that Christ had died for His people because He loved them and that if I truly loved Him, I could be brought into His family. The problem was I did not apply all of this knowledge to myself. I didn't understand how God — or anyone really — could actually love me. But I kept working towards earning this love and wanting to feel the way that I saw other people around me feeling. I wanted to desire God, and I wanted to know Him, but I didn't.

After graduation, I started developing a slow bitterness towards Christianity, though I didn't dare tell anyone besides one or two very close friends. The church's view on women in ministry fueled this bitterness; I loved the actual work of ministry and of studying the words of the Bible in depth, and I wanted to be able to do this for a job. But as a Southern Baptist, this wouldn't be possible. I didn't like that my plans wouldn't be possible while still adhering to what I was being taught in the Bible. I was resolved not to change my position, and my bitterness began growing deeper.

At this time, I was living in Charleston, SC working on my Master's Degree in English and volunteering at my local church. Since I still avidly sought the approval of those around me, I didn't want anyone to know how I felt inside. So, I kept silent and kept moving, and the bitterness grew into anger.

I didn't like how bitter and angry I was inside. So, I started working harder at trying to feel like a better person. I worked harder at being a good person, becoming more and more involved in ministry. I even started looking at what I saw as higher versions of ministry, applying to missions agencies and looking for full-time ministry jobs. None of these things worked out, and my belief that I couldn't be loved by God grew stronger than ever. I felt completely rejected by Him, so I decided to change directions. I knew that I was good at teaching and enjoyed looking closely at words and studying them, so I decided to pursue getting a PhD in an English-related field and pursue my goal on my own terms.

I began to pursue my own success; I chose one school to get into – the best program I could find, and I was accepted. School was great at first. I met plenty of new people – great people, really. I was thrust into learning full force and went through a sort of boot camp of learning. I was propelling my mind to think new things, ideas I didn't even know were out there or that I was capable of. And I began losing sight of God. These new ideas were taking their place in my mind; how could there be one God who had created everything? How could there even be one reality? Everything seemed to be multiplicitous. I slowly began believing in multiple realities and in there being little to purpose in life.

I began to see a side of myself that I had been covering up for many years – a dark, bitter, hopeless side. My close friends who were still around me at the time said they didn't recognize me and that they wanted “the real Kelly” back. Even my new friends saw that something wasn't right and that I had no happiness. On paper, my life looked like it was headed exactly where it should be going, but inside, things were bleak. And I started seeking new means of happiness: drinking, belittling others, slander, you name it. At this point, I knew I had gone so far that even if there were a God, he definitely couldn't and wouldn't love me at this point. So, I continued in my misery, thinking that my life didn't matter, nor did my actions.

Something happened, though, and in mid-February, I was in a situation that caused a rift between me and someone who had been one of my dearest friends for years. Because of my actions and lack of concern for how I treated others, I lost one of my very best friends, perhaps forever. The loss of this friendship broke me inside and out. I sank into an extremely deep depression like I'd never known. I no longer wanted to live; all hope was gone.

I didn't know what to do, so I started pursuing any means possible of making myself feel better. I even tried coming back to the church and seeing if I could do something to make my life get back on track, but everytime I would go into a church, I would get even angrier. I did not want to look at my sin, and I especially did not want to look at how dark my heart had gotten.

In mid March, though, I went down to Charleston to visit some friends. I was at my lowest and was desperate for anything to help me, so I stayed with one of the pastors from my church and his family. While I was there, they talked with me and prayed with me; I didn't listen much, but it felt so nice to be around people who truly cared. I still wasn't ready to look at my sin, though.

So, I continued in my studies at Clemson and continued to at least try and make myself feel better. I tried counseling, and that helped here and there. I learned simple techniques for making better choices, but once again, I was just masking what was going on inside with better outward decisions.

I returned to Charleston again to visit some friends, and when asked how I was, my response was, "I'm exhausted." Nothing described me better at the time. I was tired of pretending to be someone on the outside who was so different than who I was on the inside. And I was tired of being a different person to the different groups of people I was around. I was forcing myself into being an ever-changing chameleon of a person, and with each different shade, I became more tired and confused.

Thankfully, these friends invited me to come and stay with them for awhile. They could see I was tired and wanted to change, and they had something to offer me: hope in Christ. I was at a point that I didn't know where to turn, so I agreed to come. I started living with them and going with them to church. And I started observing the people I was around, looking at how these people truly had hope and joy in all of their circumstances. This was something I'd seen before, but in the past I'd always wondered how I could pretend to be like that, not how I could truly change and become that way.

As I lived in Charleston and saw the day to day interactions of my friends and people at my church, I saw that Christ was real in their life. They loved him and truly desired to know his will and to follow it. This wasn't something fake; it was real. And I wanted to be a part of it.

So one afternoon, I went back into my bedroom and asked God to help me. I told him I couldn't create a life for myself that was anything worth having, that I didn't want to live my life as a chameleon, that I didn't want to live my life without him. I told him I didn't want to follow my plans anymore because they led nowhere; I saw what God had been doing in the lives of the people around me, and I saw how much he loved them. I told him I wanted to be a part of this love and be in his family - that I wanted to know him, truly know him, not just know about him.

And God saved me then and there - saved me from darkness and from myself. I knew for the very first time that God loved me. This love was personal, and I loved him, too. I finally had a genuine desire to know and be known by him.

This all happened in mid June of 2012. Since then, I have been learning more and more everyday about all that God has done for me and for all who would call upon his name. I've been blessed to be in an environment and in a place where I have time to sink myself into God's Word and to delight in it. I'm able to get into his word everyday and to pray to him and ask him to direct my paths. I've been faced with difficult decisions already and am trying to continue daily to seek God and to follow what he is saying for me to do. The only way I know to do this is to read his Word, pray, and truly listen for his voice.

In 2013, God opened new doors of ministry for me, something I surely didn't deserve after squandering the ministries I'd been a part of prior to coming to a genuine faith in him. He let me teach a Bible study to the most precious group of high school girls and let me serve as a teacher at a Christian school where I could teach adolescents literature but also a Christian worldview. And, in 2016, God also gave me the incredible privilege of moving to Bangkok, Thailand for three years to serve on a team with the International Mission Board. He allowed me to go and tell others about him for the very first time, to introduce people to the truths about who He is, about His goodness, and about how they, too, could know Him.

I couldn't be more thankful for all that Christ has done for me. He has truly saved me, not just from a hopeless life in this world but also from an eternity in hell apart from him. There is no better feeling than knowing I am loved by the great, eternal God who created the universe. My goal now is to tell others about him and how they, too, can know him. I am humbled and privileged to have this time with those of you participating in this study, as well. God has redeemed my life from the pit and has given me the blessed mercy of ministering using His Word, which is a blessing I in no way deserve but that I am incredibly grateful for.

Day Three: Worship God with a Thankful Heart, Part Two

1. Pray

Before we begin reading and examining God's Word, let's ask the Lord to lead us in the study of His Word.

2. Examine

As we continue dwelling with God in worship, we'll return to Psalm 107. Read this psalm in its entirety before moving on. Today, we will focus on the second half of the psalm.

¹ Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever!

² Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,
whom he has redeemed from trouble

³ and gathered in from the lands,
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.

⁴ Some wandered in desert wastes,
finding no way to a city to dwell in;

⁵ hungry and thirsty,
their soul fainted within them.

⁶ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.

⁷ He led them by a straight way
till they reached a city to dwell in.

⁸ Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wondrous works to the children of man!

⁹ For he satisfies the longing soul,
and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

¹⁰ Some sat in darkness and in the shadow
of death, prisoners in affliction and in irons,

¹¹ for they had rebelled against the words
of God, and spurned the counsel of the
Most High.

¹² So he bowed their hearts down with hard
labor; they fell down, with none to help.

³ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.

¹⁴ He brought them out of darkness and the
shadow of death, and burst their bonds apart.

¹⁵ Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast
love, for his wondrous works to the children
of man!

¹⁶ For he shatters the doors of bronze and
cuts in two the bars of iron.

¹⁷ Some were fools through their sinful ways,
and because of their iniquities suffered affliction;
¹⁸ they loathed any kind of food, and they drew
near to the gates of death.

¹⁹ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.

²⁰ He sent out his word and healed them,
and delivered them from their destruction.

²¹ Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast
love, for his wondrous works to the children
of man!

²² And let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving,
and tell of his deeds in songs of joy!

²³ Some went down to the sea in ships,
doing business on the great waters;

²⁴ they saw the deeds of the LORD,
his wondrous works in the deep.

²⁵ For he commanded and raised the stormy
wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea.

²⁶ They mounted up to heaven;
they went down to the depths;
their courage melted away in their evil light;

²⁷ they reeled and staggered like drunken
men and were at their wits' end.

²⁸ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.

²⁹ He made the storm be still, and the waves
of the sea were hushed.

³⁰ Then they were glad that the waters
were quiet, and he brought them to their
desired haven.

³¹ Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wondrous works to the children of man!

³² Let them extol him in the congregation
of the people, and praise him in the assembly
of the elders.

³³ He turns rivers into a desert,
springs of water into thirsty ground,

³⁴ a fruitful land into a salty waste,
because of the evil of its inhabitants.

³⁵ He turns a desert into pools of water,
a parched land into springs of water.

³⁶ And there he lets the hungry dwell,
and they establish a city to live in;

³⁷ they sow fields and plant vineyards and
get a fruitful yield.

³⁸ By his blessing they multiply greatly,
and he does not let their livestock diminish.

³⁹ When they are diminished and brought low
through oppression, evil, and sorrow,

⁴⁰ he pours contempt on princes and
makes them wander in trackless wastes;

⁴¹ but he raises up the needy out of affliction
and makes their families like flocks.

⁴² The upright see it and are glad,
and all wickedness shuts its mouth.

⁴³ Whoever is wise, let him attend to these
things; let them consider the steadfast love
of the LORD. (ESV)

The Context:

As mentioned yesterday, Psalm 107 is a prayer focused on worshipping God by thanking Him for His wondrous works. Yesterday, we looked at the psalm as a whole and focused on the first half of the psalm. Today, we'll take a closer look at verses 33-43, studying how we see God's mercy at work in the way that He transforms creation and people for His kingdom purposes.

In this section of the psalm, we see the psalmist describe God's actions towards the wicked and the righteous. The psalmist draws clear distinctions between how God acts towards each group. For example, verse 33 explains that God dries up rivers, turning them into deserts, due to evil inhabitants. In contrast, he shows that God turns deserts into pools of water on the behalf of the righteous. Of course, these are not absolute statements. Rather, they demonstrate that God brings blessings on the righteous and curses on the wicked, a major theme in the Psalms, which we first saw in Psalm 1.

Just as Psalm 1 is often described as a wisdom psalm, this psalm, too, can be described as one due to this last verse. While the psalm begins with a hymnlike structure, this last verse shows that it also contains elements of a wisdom psalm. The psalmist shows the readers / hearers of the psalm that those who are wise will reflect on God's actions in the world, watching carefully how He acts towards His children and those who are not. A wise person pays attention to that which is important, and there is nothing more important than determining the truths about the God of the universe, especially those truths that impact both our day to day lives as well as the life to come.

3. If this psalm demonstrates nothing else, it certainly demonstrates the activeness of God in His creation. God is not a God who has set the world in motion and then walked away. He has been, remains, and will be active among His creation to bring about His kingdom purposes. How has this psalm shaped your view of God's involvement in not only the world but in your life?

4. The psalmist closes this psalm by saying that the wise will "attend to" these things. Other translations say that the wise will observe these things. Why will a wise person pay attention to the truths about God's actions / involvement in the world?

Reflection and Application

The final stanzas of Psalm 107 point out the importance of aligning ourselves with the One, True God. Just as the wise person pays attention to the actions of the Almighty God, the even wiser person then aligns their actions with His. We must respond to Him; His actions demand a response. One response is to continue living our lives as we please, with no regard for His laws or His ways. Another is to bow before Him, acknowledging Him as God and King, and submit to His authority. When we do so, we find that we are beneficiaries of not only His blessings in the next life but also in this one.

1. Yesterday, we wrote our stories of thankfulness regarding how God redeemed our souls. Today, I want you to write out another story of God's faithfulness in your life. Write about a time when God delivered you from something (captivity, sin, an idol, disease, danger, or something else), or write about how he transformed your life out of oppression or affliction. Plan to share this with another person this week in an act of public worship to God.

2. Read Psalm 1 again, and reflect on your answer to number 1 in the previous section. Now, reflect on your own life. Do you find yourself among the wicked or the righteous? Why do you think that? Are you in the group you want to be in? Why or why not?

3. Today's focus was worshipping God with a thankful heart. What are your three greatest blessings you've received from the Lord? Write them down below; then spend time thanking God for these blessings.

Day Four: Worship with Joy and Gladness

1. Pray

Before we begin reading and examining God's Word, let's ask the Lord to lead us in the study of His Word.

2. Examine

Today, we will focus on worshipping God with joy and gladness. To begin, read Psalm 100 in its entirety.

¹ Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!

² Serve the LORD with gladness!

Come into his presence with singing!

³ Know that the LORD, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his;

we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving,

and his courts with praise!

Give thanks to him; bless his name!

⁵ For the LORD is good;

his steadfast love endures forever,

and his faithfulness to all generations. (ESV)

The Context:

Psalm 100 calls on the entire earth to worship God -- with great joy! This psalm calls to mind that glorious future date when all of the earth will once again come under God's perfect reign, no longer being subject to the curse that accompanied the fall of man. At that time, even the earth itself will rejoice and give praise to Almighty God. While the psalmist is certainly looking forward to the Lord's full and ultimate reign, he is also reminding the readers of this psalm that God is still ultimately sovereign over the world. Yes, there will come a day when Christ returns, a day when God binds Satan and throws him into the lake of fire, a day when there is no more sin - hallelujah!! But even though we anticipate this day with so much joy and excitement, we can still rejoice in the present knowing that the same God who will reign then is actually still reigning now.

For this reason, the psalmist calls on the people of God to "make a joyful noise to the Lord." I love this phrase because it doesn't require a beautiful melody; it doesn't even require that one be able to carry a tune. In fact, a noise isn't even necessarily a song. It could be a shout, a whistle, any noise that is full of joy and that is directed in praise to the Lord. Verse 2 builds on verse 1 and shows that the overflow of a heart joyful before the Lord is cheerful service to Him. God wants us to honor Him with our hearts, our lips, and our service.

Verse 3 directs us as to how we can foster joyfulness within our hearts: remember who God is. God is the Creator, our Creator! He made each one of us and called His creation "good." He is a God who didn't just create the world and walk away but who continually sustains the world by the work of His hands and is present and active in the goings on within it, including our individual lives. How mind boggling is that? The psalmist makes this psalm even more personal to God's children, declaring that we belong to God: "It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." (Psalm 100:3, ESV). The fact that we belong to God, that we are His, is one of the most beautiful truths in all of Scripture. This fact should build up gratefulness and joy deep within our spirit!

Now that the psalmist has given us more reasons than we need to glorify and praise God, he tells us how we can come into the presence of our God: enter with thanksgiving and praise. This verse offers up the image of all of God's children entering through the gates of the city, coming up to His temple and worshipping Him together with praise and thanksgiving. This shows the importance and significance of corporate worship when God's people come together and worship together with one voice, lifting up holy hands in praise to the All Glorious God. We as believers under the new covenant also have the added blessing of being able to enter all the way into the temple, going straight into the holy of holies, not going through a priest, for the temple was torn in two when Christ sacrificed Himself on behalf of all God's children. Hebrews 10:19 encourages us, "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus" (ESV).

The psalmist closes the psalm by reminding us why we should come before God in worship: "For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations" (Psalm 100:5, ESV). The psalmist did not need to include another reason to praise God. His being God is enough. But God's glory and worth is immense, eternal, and magnificent; therefore, the psalmist could go on forever adding verses about why God is deserving of praise. He alone is good. No one else is capable of love like God. God alone is consistently and forever faithful to Himself and to all of His children. God is capable of what none of us is capable of: sheer, utter perfection. The psalmist recognizes that and, for that reason, he calls on all of us to individually and corporately worship God in a manner that He deserves. God deserves joyful, exuberant praise that is centered on Him, not on us, and that is public so that all will know of His goodness, mercy, and faithfulness.

Your Turn to Dig In

1. When you think of a joyful noise before the Lord, what comes to mind? What informs your picture of a joyful noise?
2. Why do you think the psalmist emphasizes joy and gladness in the first two verses of this psalm? Why is it important to have joyful hearts when singing praises to God or serving Him?
3. Does knowing that you belong to the Lord help to increase your joy in Him? Why or why not?

Reflection and Application

We serve a good God. No one other than Christians can say that with assurance and truthfulness. And this good God, who created us, our forefathers, and our world, allows us to know Him. He is immutable, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, and eternal. He has a love greater than we could ever know, yet we are the unworthy recipients of this great love. It is no wonder that Psalm 100 was one of the most often sung of all psalms in church history. Charles Spurgeon remarked that a common saying during his tenure of preaching in the 1800s was, "let us sing the old one hundredth." Spurgeon referred to this psalm as one of the "everyday expressions of the church" and proclaimed that it always would be as long as "men exist whose hearts are loyal to the Great King." Before moving on to our application response today, take a moment to check your heart. Is it loyal to the Great King? If not, spend some time confessing sin, repenting, and getting your heart right with the Lord before moving on.

1. Rather than the typical written application, today I want you to spend your application time listening to some of the songs from this week's playlist. Listen to these songs. Sing them. Clap your hands. Kneel down; bow before God. Dance if you want to. Whatever you do, put your entire focus on God Himself, on His mighty works, on His beautiful character, and on His majestic attributes. Thank Him, and praise Him, for He is worthy!

Day Five: Week Eight Debrief & PERCH Study

I hope and pray that this week's study has greatly encouraged your heart and spirit, that it has helped you to clearly see the worthiness of God and stirred up offerings of praise and thanksgiving to Him. God alone is worthy to be praised; God alone is worthy of unending praise. We who are believers will have the privilege of praising Him for all of eternity. I encourage you to start that praise now, for there is absolutely nothing better we can do with our time than to worship and adore our God and King. This worship can come in the form of song, public words of affirmation, prayers, testimonies of what He has done, joyful noises of all kinds, acts of service, and more. As you think through which Scripture passage to choose for the final day of this week, ask God to show you which verse will help you to bring Him the most praise and thanksgiving.

Debrief Week Eight Using PERCH

Choose a passage from one of the psalms we read this week. It can be an entire psalm, or it can be a small portion of a psalm. If you chose a shorter passage, write out the passage below. If you choose a longer passage, choose key verses and keywords to write below.

Change: Prayerfully ask God how you can apply this passage to your life. Prayerfully consider what changes you need to make in your actions or beliefs in order to make the application of this passage to your life. Write these below.

Help: Prayerfully consider how you can help others using this passage. How can you share it with them? How can you spread the Truth of this passage to both believers and non-believers?

