

Make a Joyful Noise

It was quite a distance from the church parking lot into the building and then down the hall to the classroom where everyone was meeting, but Sister Gladys was determined to make it. Once in the room, she held onto the front of her walker as she eased herself down in a folding chair.

Then she let out a sigh and said, "Praise the Lord."

"Are you comfortable?" asked Seanna, the young woman who had brought Sister Gladys to today's women's Bible study.

"Yes, baby. Praise God," said Sister Gladys. "I'm so happy to be here and to see all of you."

The women were in the second week of their Bible study, and Sister Earlene was leading the study and discussion. The session proved to be another rich time of learning, sharing, and fellowship.

"At this time, I'd like to call on the one-in-a-million woman of God at our church, Sister Gladys," said Sister Earlene. "Sister Gladys, can you share a little more with us about how you have walked with God, for—how long has it been? More than 40 years?"

"It's been 42 years," said Sister Gladys, "and it's been through God's faithfulness to me! I wish I could say that I have always been faithful and strong.

"It's because of God's love that I am here today," Gladys continued, "clothed in His righteousness, and am the woman of God that I am. I praise God for His goodness to me!"

- 1.** *In what ways do you believe God is shepherding you?*
- 2.** *What about God's shepherding do you dislike?*
- 3.** *What would your life be like if the Lord was not shepherding you?*

Rejoice in God's Presence

Psalm 100:1-2, KJV

1 Make a joyful noise
unto the LORD, all ye
lands.

2 Serve the LORD with
gladness: come before his
presence with singing.

Psalm 100:1-2, NIV

¹Shout for joy to the LORD, all
the earth.

²Worship the LORD with
gladness;
come before him with joyful
songs.

The first thing we see in Psalm 100 is that our praise toward the Lord should be joyful and heartfelt. Most of us at one time or another have been encouraged to make a “joyful noise” when singing praises to our God. Such encouragement usually comes during the congregational singing time because we know that not every believer has what might be considered a professional singing voice. But a beautiful singing voice is not necessary to please God.

The Hebrew for “noise” (vs. 1, KJV) or “shout” (NIV) is *rua* (ROO-ah), which carries with it the idea of being loud, even to the point of being ear-splitting. It is not that God cannot hear soft singing, but rather that He is pleased when both our hearts and our voices are lifted joyfully to Him. When there is true joy in our hearts, there will naturally be volume in our voices when we sing praises to Him. Genuine joy cannot be silenced or contained for long; it will ultimately overflow with shouts and songs of praise to the very source of joy, our holy God who alone is worthy of praise.

The next thing to understand from the psalm is that the call to shout for joy to our God knows no earthly boundaries. All lands and nations of the earth are to make a joyful noise to Him. For this to happen today, the Lord’s people must be faithful to His great commission to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19).

Another point for us to see here is that true worship means serving the Lord gladly. The Hebrew word *abad* (ab-bad) refers both to a servant and a worshiper. The two are really two sides of the same coin. When joy overflows a

believer's heart, it cannot help but to express itself in both song and service to the Lord. As the apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Rome, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1, KJV). The Greek word Paul used for service, *latreia* (lat-RI-ah), also pertains to worship. So whether in the Old Testament or the New, worshiping the Lord and serving Him gladly go hand in hand.

Finally, from the first two verses of our Scripture passage, we see that true worship of God brings us into His very presence. The Hebrew word here for coming before Him into His presence, *paniym* (paw-NEEM), actually refers to the face of God. Joyful, heartfelt praise brings God's people right before His face. We may not see Him with our physical eyes, but our spirits can sense His loving face beaming brightly upon our hearts as we worship Him in spirit and in truth.

4. *How should God's people praise Him?*

5. *From where on earth should joyful praise come?*

6. *What is the relationship between worship and service to God?*

Rejoice in God's Pasture

Psalm 100:3, KJV

3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Psalm 100:3, NIV

³Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Sadly, people are all too inclined to worship many things other than God such as worldly riches, actors, musicians, athletes, politicians, etc. However, none of these is worthy of our worship and praise. So now, after showing us the importance of rejoicing in the presence of the Lord by heartfelt worship in both song and service to

Him, our Scripture passage helps us take a step back to get a better view and understanding of why we should praise our Lord in such a manner. Unlike all the unworthy idols that so many people worship, our Lord is fully worthy for four reasons given in verse 3: He is our holy God, our mighty Creator, our Owner, and our Good Shepherd.

As holy God, our Lord is distinctly and uniquely separate from the physical universe in which we exist. And as such, He has attributes that make Him uniquely worthy of our praise. He is all-powerful, but He is also good, which means that He uses His mighty power in a manner that is beneficial, not destructive. Our holy God is also perfectly just, so we know that rebellious people will get only what they truly deserve. However, He is also merciful, so when people repent of their rebellion against Him and trust in His Son for salvation from sin, He mercifully forgives and adopts them into His family.

And if all this were not enough, our God is also our Creator. People, as well as the rest of the universe, are His creative handiwork. As the potter molds the clay and then fires it to turn it into a useful vessel, so too did our Creator God make us for useful service to Him and to others. As our Creator, the Lord is worthy of our praise.

And we come before the Lord in joyful praise and worship because He is our Shepherd. In the pastures of our Good Shepherd, the grass is green, the waters are peaceful, and our souls are refreshed in His presence. We truly have every reason to worship our Creator God and Good Shepherd with heartfelt joy and thanksgiving!

7. *What attributes of God make Him worthy of our praise?*

8. *How should the fact that God is our Creator impact our worship of Him?*

9. *In what ways should being the sheep of God's pasture affect our worship of Him?*

Rejoice in God's Holy Place

Psalm 100:4-5, KJV

4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

Psalm 100:4-5, NIV

⁴Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

⁵For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

The psalm continues with additional ways to praise the Lord and then closes with even more reasons for doing so. During the days that many of the psalms were written, God's people were to worship at the temple built in Jerusalem by David's son Solomon. There were gates and courts that led to the temple, through the inner court, and then ultimately into the very holy of holies where the ark of the covenant rested. Though only the high priest could go into the most holy place of the ark, all God's people could enter the gates of God's holy city, Jerusalem, and come to the courts of His temple to bring the appropriate offerings and sacrifices in holy worship to Him.

God's people give thanks and praise to Him not only for what He does for us, but also for who He is. To that end, our passage closes with a reminder that our loving Lord is good, merciful, and faithful to us. As Paul reminded Titus, "When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy" (Titus 3:4-5).

10. *How should God's people enter His heavenly temple?*

11. *What attributes of God are given here?*

12. *In what ways has our merciful, faithful God been good to you?*

The Good Shepherd

A favorite artist of religious paintings among Christians is the German artist, Bernhard Plockhorst (1825–1907). Arguably his most famous work is his painting entitled “The Good Shepherd,” in which Jesus is carrying a lamb while surrounded by sheep. It depicts Jesus as a loving shepherd in the way Jesus’ face expresses tenderness and gentleness and thereby reflects the marvelous relationship between Himself and His followers.

This endearing portrait of Jesus resonates with Christians because it visualizes the way He cares for His flock, both in how He feels for us and in how He guides and protects us. It also illustrates how vulnerable we are in this world. Without this shepherd, the sheep would be lost and in constant peril, as would we without Jesus as our shepherd.

What the painting does not convey, but which is also true is that, like sheep, we often stray and go our own way. Those are the times when Jesus disciplines us; and usually, we resent how He intercedes in our lives until we realize that He is turning us away from our own follies for our own good. Therefore, with a thankful heart, we glorify Jesus for who He is and praise Him for what He is doing in our lives.

Of course, Jesus is not leading us aimlessly. There is a wonderful pasture where He is taking us, a haven full of nourishment and beauty where peace and joy endure everlastingly. Indeed, the Lord is the good shepherd because He is good to us now and forever. “I am the good shepherd,” [Jesus said]. “I know my sheep and my sheep know me” (John 10:14).

13. *How is Jesus like a shepherd?*

14. *From what things is the Lord shepherding you away?*

15. *How do you envision the ultimate pasture God is leading you to?*

Jesus Watches over Me!

This week's Scripture lesson focused on Psalm 100, a song of praise to the Lord God, who watches over His people in the same way as a shepherd watches over his sheep. In this psalm, the psalmist joyfully thanks the Lord for creating and claiming the Jews as His people while declaring that their Lord is truly God. Moreover, the psalmist exhorts every generation of God's people to glorify His name and proclaim His eternal mercy and truth.

► *During the coming week, briefly describe in your study book a situation in which the Lord Jesus shepherded you. Explain what you learned about Jesus from this experience and relate how you thanked Him for the way He watched over you.*

KEY VERSE

Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

—Psalm 100:3, KJV

Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

—Psalm 100:3, NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of October 4 through October 10

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross devotionals* on these passages.)

Mon. Ecclesiastes 3:16-22—Where Is Justice?

Tues. Psalm 7:8-17—A Prayer for Justice.

Wed. Amos 5:21-25—Let Justice Roll Down.

Thurs. Matthew 12:14-21—God's Servant Proclaims Justice.

Fri. Psalm 9:13-20—God Has Executed Judgment.

Sat. Luke 4:14-21—Jesus Pronounces Release and Recovery.

Sun. Psalm 9:1-12—God Judges with Righteousness.