

Psalm 100.

How very sad that we cannot now worship the Lord collectively in our Sunday worship. It has been my joy and privilege to worship with Trinity Grace fellowship for 56 years, meeting regularly on the Lord's Day and midweek meetings. To know God and to be able to worship him through his precious Son, Jesus Christ, with Lord's people, is the pinnacle of our Faith. The present coronavirus crisis presents a real problem in that it physically separates and divides what God has joined together. Of course, we will always be one body with Christ being the head, but interaction with fellow believers as a church fellowship cannot be compensated.

It is vitally important, therefore, that we never lose sight of the importance of worshipping together. We must try to compensate the restrictions on our collective worship by maintaining our times of family worship and availing ourselves of the facilities provided by the elders through the church website. Below, in Psalm 100, with the help of Charles Haddon Spurgeon is a wonderful reminder what worshipping the Lord really means to the Lord's people.

Make joyful noise to the LORD, all you lands.

The original word signifies a glad shout, such as loyal subjects give when their king appears among them, (think of the queen appearing on the balcony of Buckingham Palace.) Our happy God should be worshipped by a happy people; a cheerful spirit is in keeping with his nature, his acts, and the gratitude which we should cherish for his mercies. In every land Jehovah's goodness is seen, therefore in every land he should be praised.

Serve the LORD with gladness, come before his presence with singing.

He is the Lord, and therefore is to be served; he is our gracious Lord, and therefore to be served with joy. The invitation here given is not a melancholy one, as though adoration was attending funeral service, but a cheery gladsome exhortation, as though we were bidden to a marriage feast. 'Come before his presence with singing.' In worship we need to be conscious of the presence of God. This is an act which must be done with great solemnity, but at the same time it must not be performed in the servility of fear, and therefore we come before him, not with weepings and wailings, but with the singing of devout and joyful psalms and hymns to our glorious God.

*Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God,
But favourites of the heavenly King
Must speak his praise abroad.*

Know that the LORD, he is God.

Our worship must be intelligent. We ought to know whom we worship and why. Jehovah is God in the fullest, most absolute, and most exclusive sense: he is God alone and we can only really know his true character when we obey him, trust him, submit to him, be zealous for him and love him through the grace that only he can bestow. It is only when we truly know him that we can offer acceptable praise.

It is he who has made us, and not we ourselves.

Shall not the creature reverence its maker? Some men live as though they had made themselves. Christians, however, recognise the origin of their being and well-being, and take no honour to themselves either for being or being what they are. Neither in our or first creation or our second creation dare we put so much as a finger upon the glory, for it is the sole right and property of the Almighty. Of late philosophy as labored hard to prove that all things have been developed from atoms, or have, in other words, made themselves. The amount of credence necessary for accepting this dogma is a thousand-fold greater than the absurd belief of winking Madonna's and smiling Bambinos. For our part, we find it far easier to believe that the Lord made us than that we were developed by a long chain of natural selections from floating atoms which fashioned themselves.

We are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

It is a great honour to be chosen by God out of all the world and to be *his* own people; to be guided by his wisdom, tended by his care, and fed from his riches in glory. Sheep gather round the shepherd and look to him; in the same manner let us gather round the great Shepherd of the sheep. The avowal of our relationship to God is in itself praise; when we recount his goodness and all that he does for us, we are rendering to him the best adoration. Our songs require none of the inventions of fictions, the bare facts are enough; the simple narration of the mercies of the Lord is more astonishing than the products of imagination. That we are the sheep of his pasture is a plain truth that cannot be rescinded.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.

In all our public service the rendering of thanks must abound; it is like the incense of the temple, which filled the whole house with smoke. Expiatory sacrifices are ended, but those of gratitude will never be out of date. So long as we are receivers of mercy, we must be givers of thanks. Mercy permits us to enter his gates; let us praise him for that mercy. Praise the Lord, for his mercy endures forever!

‘And into his courts with praise.’ Into whatever court of the Lord you enter, let your admission be the subject of praise. The inner most court is now open to believers, and we enter into that which is within the veil; it is incumbent upon us that we acknowledge the high privilege by our songs.

Be thankful to him, and bless his name.

Let the praise be in your heart as well as your tongue and let it be all for him to whom it belongs. He has blessed you, bless him in return; bless his name, his character, his person. Whatever he does, make sure that you bless him for it; bless him when he takes away as well as when he gives; bless him as long as you live, under all circumstances.

For the LORD is good, his mercy is everlasting.

‘For the Lord is good,’ This sums up his character and contains a mass of reasons for praise. He is good, gracious, kind, bountiful, loving; yes, God is love. He who does not praise the good is not good himself. The kind of praise that is promoted by this psalm is one of uttermost joy and gladness. The goodness of God is the strongest argument for praising God.

‘His mercy is everlasting.’ God is not mere justice, stern and cold; he has bowels of compassion, and does not delight in the sinner’s death. Towards his own people that same mercy is effectual and radiantly displayed; it has been theirs from all eternity and shall be theirs world without end. Everlasting mercy is a glorious theme for a sacred song of praise.

And his truth endures to all generations.

No fickle being is he, promising and forgetting. He has entered into a covenant with his people, and will never revoke it, nor alter the thing that has gone out of his lips. As our fathers found him faithful, so will our sons, and their seed forever.

A changeable God would be terror to the righteous, they would have no sure anchorage, and amid a changing world they would be driven to and fro in perpetual fear of shipwreck. Our heart leaps for joy as we bow before the One who has never broken his word or changed his purpose.

Praise the Lord! For his mercy endures forever!