

# PSALMS: OBEDIENCE AND DESIRE

psalm 100: rejoicing

## Questions for Personal Study

- Who does God say he is in this Psalm?
- Who does God say I am in this Psalm?
- How does this psalm tell me to approach God?
- Is this different from my usual way of approaching God? If yes, how so?
- How does this affect the way I pray? Sing? Live?
- How does this Psalm make God's grace more amazing?

## Questions for Study in Community

- What would it look like to worship God together using this Psalm?
- To what degree are you uncomfortable being so public with your heart?
- Why do you think that is?
- Take some time to pray this Psalm together.

## Questions for Staying on Mission

- How does "all the earth" come to make a joyful noise to the Lord?
- In what ways are we increasing God's fame in our mission together?

## On Seeing Jesus in the Psalms

Whenever we read the Psalms there is a subtle temptation to apply them directly to ourselves. We need to remember that these poems come from within the Story of God and his workings amongst this people called Israel. These people had a particular experience of God that shaped their picture of Him. They had no idea that God would fulfill his promises by stepping into this world as a man, living a perfect life, and dying a substitutionary death. But we do. We know where the Story is headed, and we must read the Psalms in that light.

As you read, think particularly about how the commands, experiences, and emotions of the psalmist are connected to Jesus. Filter the verses through the cross, reflecting on what they tell us about the need for a Savior in order to bring sinful people into the presence of a holy God. Never forget that though God's grace to you is free, you enjoy your fellowship with God at a great price - God crushed his own Son in order to bring *you* into his courts with joy!

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## A Study in the Psalms

The Old Testament book of Psalms is a collection of prayers, songs, and poems that Israel used in worship of One True God. The reformer John Calvin once called the Psalms an "anatomy of all the parts of the soul," because in them we see human emotions in all their perplexities colliding head-on with the commands and claims of God. The title of this series, "Obedience and Desire" comes from the central question posed to us by the language of the Psalms: "How is it possible to obey God in the midst of our inmost thoughts and emotions?" In this 4 week series in the book of Psalms our goal is to gain a deeper understanding of God, life, and ourselves. We approach this goal keeping these three things in mind:

First, the Psalms are instructive. They instruct us on who God is, who we are, and how we are to relate to God. The psalms are full of truth for the mind, directing us to a life of rightfully honoring and God. This is the *obedience* part of our series title.

Second, the Psalms are poems. They are meant to stir us deep within and help us to channel our affections for God. The psalmists are laying open their inmost thoughts, desires, and emotions before God, inviting us to examine the status of our own hearts. This is the *desire* part of our series title.

Finally, the Psalms lead us to Jesus. The Psalms point forward to the coming of a Savior, one who mediates between God and men, one who invites us into the joyful obedience the Psalms describe. In each Psalm, we'll keep our eyes open for how we are being pointed forward to the person and work of Jesus.

## Psalm 100

- 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.

### Rejoicing

This week we'll be looking at Psalm 100 and exploring the theme of "rejoicing." In this familiar psalm, the psalmist gives us several very clear commands regarding how we are to worship God. In turn, the psalmist gives us several reasons why we ought to do so.

Verse 1 – Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! God is good and wants his children to have joy. Making a joyful noise is in line with God's character because he is a joyful God. His goodness is evident throughout the earth, and his plan is to redeem all of creation, therefore the entire earth is charged with his praise.

Verse 2 – Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! The invitation to worship in this verse has to do with the condition of our heart. God is our gracious Lord and our approach to him is on one hand with reverence and awe, while at the same time full of gladness and joy. The command to sing is further evidence that our approach to God is to be motivated by the affections of our hearts.

Verse 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. Our worship must be intelligent. If we do not have an understanding of who God is and why he deserves to be worshipped, then we will never have a full understanding of who we are as His people. If we don't have this knowledge, our worship will be in vain, and likely be subject to some created thing and not God, our LORD.

Verse 4 – Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! When we understand that God made us and we are his, and that it is by His grace and mercy that we are permitted to "enter his gates", we are thankful. God has allowed us to draw near to him!

Verse 5 - For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations. This final verse sums up the reasons why we ought to carry out all of these commands. It is at this point where the desires of our heart are stirred to praise God for who He is and carry on in obedience to Him because it is our delight. His mercy and steadfast love are everlasting, and his truth and faithfulness endure to all generations. This promise is fulfilled in the life and death of Jesus Christ. This promise gives us reason to sing and praise out of joy and gladness, and not out of obligation or duty.

### Uniting Mind and Heart

C. S. Lewis said that there are basically 3 kinds of people in the world: those who don't want to obey and so don't, those that don't want to obey but do it out of fear or pride, and those who want to obey. In Psalm 100 we are given numerous commands: make noise, serve, come in, enter, give. These are commands given by God and are therefore our duty because he made us. However, the adverbs used to describe the way we obey these commands are startling: joyful, gladness, singing, praise! These are words that describe worshipping God from the overflow of the heart!

Psalm 100 causes us to pause and consider how duty and delight can be united. How can we become the kind of people for whom obeying God is not burdensome, religious duty but joyful, grateful pleasure?

Verse 5 points us to the nature of God as a God of steadfast, abiding, committed love and faithfulness. The word translated "steadfast love" is the Hebrew word *hesed*, and is God's Covenant love to his chosen people. *Hesed* is connected to the reality that God has chosen, called, saved, and blessed his people Israel. He has promised to forgive and heal and redeem them, and then use them to do the same for the world. The psalmist obeys and rejoices in God not as way to earn God's *hesed* love but as a result of already experiencing it.

We can recognize, then, that the uniting of head and heart, of obedience and desire, can only come when our obedience is no longer a way to earn favor with God. True obedience is a response to the graciousness of God in loving unlovely people like us. And as we come to see that God's *hesed* love toward us cost him the eternal love relationship with his own Son, our hearts can be overwhelmed by that love and begin to obey God in joy and gladness!