

# Enter His Gates

## Psalm 100

### Introduction

As we celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday this week – I thought it would be fitting to consider Psalm 100 in our time of worship

This Psalm is a ‘call to worship’ Psalm – but also a ‘Thanksgiving Psalm’

Psalm 100:4, 5 - 'Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him; bless His name. For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting, and His faithfulness to all generations.'

This is a song of celebration – a celebration of God / who He is and what He has done

William Kethe wrote a hymn based on this Psalm titled – ‘Old One Hundredth’

Old 100th first appeared in a Psalter published in London - 1561 for the Genevan Psalter.

Kethe was among the English refugees who fled England when Queen Mary came to the throne

The tune used for his song – was composed by a French Hugonot – named Louis Bourgeois - - - which was later adapted [1674] for what came to be known as the doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise Him all creatures here below

One of the striking elements of this Psalm is its universal scope: ‘Shout joyfully to the Lord – all the earth’

All people are called to give thanks to God from whom all blessings flow

Janice Kaplan – wrote ‘The Gratitude Diaries’ - - - where she tried a practice of keeping a gratitude journal for one year

In her gratitude journal – she noted how difficult it is at times to choose gratitude

Janice Kaplan: 'Researchers have found that people who write down three things they're grateful for every night (or even a few times a week) improve their well-being.'

She wanted to see what would happen if she took up the practice – and was surprised to see the overall improvement in many different categories of her life [such as marriage / work / children / attitude towards life / etc.]

Researchers have found numerous positive benefits that occur with the regular practice of gratitude

Studies have shown:

- Grateful people are better able to handle adversity / stress in life
- Gratitude drives away toxic emotions – such as resentment / anger
- Gratitude encourages more positive emotions – joy / happiness / love / etc.
- Grateful people are better able to overcome depression / recover from illness – surgery more quickly
- Grateful people spot the good in life and are better able to overlook the bad

One might argue the human machine simply runs better on gratitude

For the human machine to be properly functioning – we must recognize God as the giver of every good gift – and render praise for His blessings given unto us

## **I. A Call to Praise - vv. 1-3**

As human beings – a basic axiom we recognize:

We are not responsible for everything that happens to us – but we are responsible for how we respond

When we come to a Psalm like this – we are challenged as to how we are choosing to respond to life

Are we turning our eyes heavenward - - - to worship and to give thanks? Or perhaps to grumble and complain?

What is your response to life this morning?

Certainly – you have some irritating circumstances in your life

Maybe you've been dealt some bad hands / etc.

Maybe some burdens you are carrying

Some trials you are facing

That is normal to this fallen world

Joshua Kang: 'To become truly grateful is incredibly difficult, but the difficulty of the process makes the results all the more lovely . . . The call to gratitude is the invitation to a life of tending and guarding the inner gardens of our hearts . . . Whether we are thankful or not does not depend upon our circumstances but upon our hearts.'

He makes the important point that we have a choice in the matter – we can choose gratitude

How do we rejoice and give thanks in a wicked world where things go wrong . . . when we get stuck in a traffic jam on I -80! - - - when the weather rains on the one day we planned our outdoor gathering - - - or more seriously - - - when people we love get sick and die . . . and any number of things that can work against our gratitude?

I Thessalonians 5:18 - 'In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.'

How?

One of the things we do – is we consider the future God has promised to us

\*\*\* Randy Alcorn: 'By rejoicing in Christ, we lay claim to the fact that God is bigger than the Fall and affirm that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will reverse the Curse and reign over a new universe.'

When we rejoice while carrying burdens or facing challenges - - - we are saying: 'God is bigger than such things'

Secondly: we cast our burdens on the Lord

God knows that we have burdens in this world – and He tells us what to do with them

Psalms 55:22 - 'Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.'

I Peter 5:7 - 'casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.'

In fact – we can argue that part of our faith – is exemplified in choosing to rejoice - - - even while circumstances are trying or burdensome

In Acts 16 – Paul and Silas had been arrested and put in prison

Acts 16:22-25 - 'And the crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them, and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks. But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;'

They were just beaten with rods!

How did they respond? - - [out of all their options] they chose to praise!

Sometimes you might come to church and feel like the world has just beaten up on you  
Or maybe you didn't feel like coming to church at all . . .

But then you come and you start to sing - - - and the Spirit begins to put your circumstances in perspective

- God is still on the throne
- He is still working all things together for my good and His glory
- My inheritance in heaven is secure / etc.

There is a note of joy in this Psalm that leaves behind every earthly sorrow or burden – and focuses upon God and what He has promised unto us

When we see things properly - - - we see reasons for worship

A world that is rightly related to God sees reasons for worship

John Piper once made a point about the connection between missions and worship

Why do we invite people to trust in Christ as Savior?

Why are we told to go and make disciples of all the nations?

Ultimately - so they can begin worshipping God with us - - - and turn from the false gods of money and sex / worldly praise or power politics / vain ambition

John Piper: 'Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. when this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.'

What is wrong with the world?

Why are people drowning their souls in alcohol or moving from one partner to the next - - - or carrying grudges or resentments thru life - - - or thinking they are the wrong gender / or chasing after the illusionary gods of money and materialism / sexual immorality / etc.?

C.S. Lewis: 'all that we call human history . . . is the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy.'

The call to Christ is a call to turn from all that and begin worshipping God! / begin living life the way it's supposed to be lived

There are seven imperatives in this Psalm: shout, serve, come, know; enter, give thanks, praise

Worship leads us on to service

Anne Lamott: 'Gratitude begins in our hearts and then dovetails into behavior. It almost always makes you willing to be of service, which is where the joy resides . . . when you are aware of all that has been given to you, in your lifetime and in the past few days, it is hard not to be humbled and pleased to give back.'

\*\*\* Service flows from gratitude

If you find a grateful person – you find a serving person

Mark 1:29-31 - 'And immediately after they had come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever; and immediately they spoke to him about her. And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them.'

Peter's mother-in-law - - - got healed by Jesus - - - how did she respond?  
She got up and waited on the disciples and Jesus - service

You and I have been healed by Jesus – washed by the blood of the lamb - - - let's serve Him

Benevolent Service for others – has residual benefits - - - it turns our hearts outward and upward to God

Sometimes – one of the best things you can do – is to serve another person – perhaps to relieve their suffering / to bless them in some way / to encourage them

One woman shared this story w/ Harold Kushner – she was on her way out of the office for a coffee break and saw a co-worker looking out the window. She said to her: 'Hey – I'm going out for coffee – do you want to come?' The woman thought for a moment – then said – 'sure'

A simple invitation / act of kindness or service

Over coffee the woman said – "I have to tell you what your invitation meant to me. Two days ago – my longtime boyfriend left me, telling me on the way out – all the things that were wrong with me. I was devastated. I was sure no one would ever love me again. When you saw me staring out that window a few minutes ago – I was trying to summon up the courage to open it and jump out, taking my life because I felt so alone.

Your invitation to coffee called me back to life. It said to me that there were still people in the world who cared about me. I don't know how to thank you.'

Sometimes service – is just being there for others

Burdens shared with another are diminished  
Joys shared with others – increase in weight

'Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth . . . come before Him with joyful singing.'

We are invited to come – corporate worship with the people of God

Gather together with God's people

Hebrews 10:25 - 'not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.'

When we set aside Sunday morning - 10am – every Lord's Day - - - we are extending an invitation for all to come to worship - - - and to lay your burdens down - - to sing His praises and renew your soul for the week ahead – being fed on the Scriptures

We believe that the Christian needs this time of worship for His soul – just like oxygen and food are necessities for the body

In the olden days – churches would ring the church bells – to summon people to gather for worship

Many believe that Psalm 100 was a song that was sung in the temple – perhaps as the priests entered the temple

One of the great experiences some of us men have had in going to the Shepherd's Conference in CA - - - is being part of vast throng of 3500 men singing praises to God collectively

'How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord – is laid for your faith in His excellent Word'

Charles Haddon Spurgeon - "Praise is the rehearsal of our eternal song. By grace we learn to sing, and in glory we continue to sing."

What will it be like in heaven when we see thousands upon thousands of angels and living creatures singing with a loud voice: 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain'

When we sing – we are saying: God is good / He is faithful – and I am thankful!

'It is He who has made us.' – v. 3

Who are we worshipping?

Our Creator God

Jeremiah 32:17 - 'Ah Lord God! Behold, Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee.'

Who made this world? / Where did this all come from?

Who has given us this life to live?

Genesis 1:1 - 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'

He placed us on this earth to know and worship Him

Of course we turned from God at the Fall – but God summons us back to Himself in redemption

David looked up at the stars in the sky

Psalms 8:3-4 - 'When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; What is man that Thou dost take thought of him? And the son of man that Thou dost care for him?'

David Jeremiah: 'When we study creation itself - its very existence and intricate design shout the necessity of an intelligent source . . . Our Milky Way Galaxy is rotating at almost 140 miles per second while speeding thru the universe at nearly 190 miles per second like a roller coaster spinning while plunging down its tracks.'

'In the minute it has taken to read this paragraph - you have actually travelled thousands of miles . . . Yet God has so fine-tuned the ride that you feel no movement at all. One slight miscalculation in these intricately inter-related movements would doom everything to a gigantic cosmic train wreck, yet everything moves with the precision of a vast machine designed by a master engineer.'

It is He who made us – and put us here on this planet

Douglas Adams: 'The fact that we live at the bottom of a deep gravity well, on the surface of a gas-covered planet going around a nuclear fireball 90 million miles away and think this to be normal is obviously some indication of how skewed our perspective tends to be.'

Life is a miracle of God

## II. A Call to Thanksgiving - vv. 4-5

Enter His gates – with thanksgiving!

Some connect this Psalm with the 2<sup>nd</sup> temple in Israel – as the priests were coming in

We don't bring animal sacrifices – but we do bring other kinds of sacrifices

Hebrews 13:15 - 'Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.'

We bring a sacrifice of praise unto God

We see the importance Jesus placed upon gratitude in one episode in His life

### Luke 17:11-19

When Jesus healed the ten lepers – He commended the one for returning to give thanks

J.C. Ryle: 'The best of us are far too like the nine lepers. We are more ready to pray than to praise, and more disposed to ask God for what we have not than to thank Him for what we have. Murmurings and complainings and discontent abound on every side of us. Few indeed are to be found who are not continually hiding their mercies under a bushel, and setting their wants and trials on a hill. These things ought not so to be.'

Don't be like the nine – we have the choice to praise God / give thanks

When we pray – we are to give thanks

Give thanks for your spouse / for your kids / your friends / your church / your job . . .

Janice Kaplan – author of 'The Gratitude Diaries'

Janice Kaplan: 'Sylvia Rosenfeld, a marriage counselor told me that when couples came to see her they often were ready to air frustrations and problems. Instead, she asked each of them to tell her something (anything!) that their

partner had done that they appreciated. Making them look at the total picture usually changed the mood in the room. "There's always something to appreciate."

Janice went on to point out one of the thanksgiving killers in our lives

It is that of unreasonable expectations

Janice Kaplan: 'When you expect everything, it's hard to be grateful for anything. So, I decided that now was the time to put aside impossible expectations and start appreciating the husband I had, rather than the imaginary cross between Brad Pitt and Bill Gates who would always remember to remove his muddy boots at the door.'

Stop and appreciate what God has given you

Psalms 136:1 - 'Give thanks to the Lord for He is good. For His lovingkindness is everlasting.'

Complain less – be happy more

Elisabeth Elliot: 'It is always possible to be thankful for what is given rather than to complain about what is not given. One or the other becomes a habit of life.'

Conclusion

Spurgeon: 'Never will the world be in its proper condition till with one unanimous shout it adores the only God.'

There will come a day when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father

You and I have the privilege of making that confession now

Give thanks to God this week – praise Him for his great salvation

Give thanks for the victory of Calvary – Jesus Christ rose from the dead and so shall we

If you are a Christian – you can always sing: 'It is well with my soul!' - because of Jesus