

## “A Song of Thanksgiving”

**Lesson Text:** Psalm 100 **Background Scripture:** Psalm 100 **Devotional Reading:** Ephesians 5:1-2, 15-20

### Psalm 100 (NIV)

A psalm. For giving grateful praise.

<sup>1</sup> Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. <sup>2</sup> Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. <sup>5</sup> For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

### TODAY’S LESSON AIMS

- **Learning Facts:** To identify the psalmist’s reasons for grateful praise.
- **Biblical Principle:** To articulate why giving thanks is appropriate for all creation.
- **Daily Application:** To make a plan to better recognize and seize opportunities for thanksgiving.

### INTRODUCTION

#### An Invitation to Joy

The confession that God constantly cares for humans points us to the reality of mystery. Why should God care? Would it be appropriate for an eternal being to care about such short-lived creatures as human beings? Given the apparently unnecessary suffering in the world, and in Israel’s history specifically, how can we know that God cares? Most of the Bible concerns these questions. Its answers should provoke a profound sense of wonder in all of us.

Psalm 100 makes a simpler point, however. It confesses that God shows profound care for a whole people, the Israelites, preserving them during times of political and social turmoil, teaching them how to live better lives through the Torah (the first five books of the Bible), and listening to their prayers whether the people were praising or lamenting. That view of God’s work lies at the very heart of the faith of both the synagogue and the church. We are part of a great flock tended by the Shepherd who drives away the wolves and leads us to good pastures, as Psalm 23 says.

### LESSON CONTEXT

Psalm 100 is a psalm of praise, or better, thanksgiving. Anyone singing this psalm should come to God with deep gratitude. The verbs throughout the psalm that are plural invite all who hear the psalm to join in praising God. The original singers were to express their appreciation for God’s work among them in the central location, the temple in Jerusalem (compare 2 Chronicles 5:2, 12–13). The reason for the gratitude appears in Psalms 93–99, which should be read along with Psalm 100. Since it is so short, it seems unlikely that it should stand by itself. Rather, it concludes a sequence of psalms that concern Israel’s joyous celebration of God’s benevolent kingship. Much of the psalm has precise parallels in Psalms 95; 96; and 98.

#### An Invitation to Worship: Psalm 100:1-2

The psalmist says, “Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.” This is a repetition of the fourth verse of Psalm 98. It signifies to give a glad shout and worshipful praise unto God. It is a universal call to praise and thanksgiving to the King of Kings. “Worship the LORD with gladness,” (v. 2) an exclamatory word (Heb *’abad*). Almost every clause of this psalm contains a similar call. Service to God is not only done out of obedience and a sense of debt; it is also done out of a sense of gratitude (cf. Eph. 2:8-10; Col. 3:17, 23-24). “Come before him with joyful songs.” Singing

requires lips of thanksgiving and triumph, as the word is rendered in Psalm 63:5; Job 3:7. Let the whole earth join in singing His praises. All human beings may join in the worship of God in the full knowledge that God welcomes all into a deep relationship (Acts 3:24–26).

## **1. How did the psalmist say we should express ourselves to God? (Psalm 100:1-2)**

### **What Do You Think?**

When do you find yourself desiring to shout for joy to the Lord?

### **Digging Deeper**

Do you ever stifle this urge? Might your answer change if you sensed “all the earth” joining in that celebration?

### **Praise the Lord**

Every Sunday morning, believers from diverse backgrounds and walks of life gather as a congregation to worship and praise God. Despite their differences, they come together in love and devotion to God. They start their worship by singing hymns and offering prayers of thanksgiving, expressing their joy and gratitude for all the blessings in their lives. Their collective voices create a beautiful harmony that fills the sanctuary, and the spirit of unity and peace permeates throughout the congregation.

As they worship and praise, this congregation embodies the message of Psalm 100:1. They enter God’s presence with joy and thanksgiving, recognizing and celebrating the goodness and faithfulness of God. Their worship is not merely ritualistic but is a genuine expression of their heartfelt devotion and gratitude toward him. Their faith and hope in God’s love and provision shines through their worship, and it serves as a powerful reminder that no matter how difficult the circumstances might be, the Maker’s presence and goodness remain constant. Can the same be said of your own prayer, praise, and worship practices?

### **An Invitation to Know: Psalm 100:3-5**

God is the one and only true God. Other “gods” do not merit the name. We as human creatures submit to the Creator who made us. We did not make ourselves, having no godly power to do so. Saying so implies God’s continued power over us and our relative powerlessness in the face of the Lord who formed us. The phrase *we are his people* implies a shared history and hope for the future, a deep relationship marked by prayer and service.

As sheep we submit to the Shepherd who died for us and now leads us in His paths. What a blessed picture of the tenderness with which we are related to God. How beautifully John 10 depicts our relationship to the Good Shepherd. Not only did God make us, but *He is making us* as we yield to Him (Ephesians 2:10). Submission means fulfillment.

## **2. How should one submit to God? (Psalm 100:3)**

### **What Do You Think?**

What reassurance can you take from God’s forming His people, not our forming ourselves into His people?

### **Digging Deeper**

How do you experience freedom in light of God’s work forming us?

Although the mention of *gates* and *courts* is usually indicative of temple worship, nonetheless this is also a metaphorical reference to the very presence of the Lord God. It is a call to worship, a call to praise, and a call to thanksgiving. Giving thanks unto God is the joyous privilege of all who love Him.

To *praise* Him means to give Him all proper due (compare Psalm 96:2). The congregation should praise God and elevate His name above all others. The congregation should revere God and treasure the opportunity to be in His presence. Worship, then, is not primarily a moment for inspiring people, but a time for connecting people to God as it brings to memory our deep dependence on God's love.

### **3. How should we enter the house of the Lord? (Psalm 100:4)**

#### **What Do You Think?**

What physical places remind you of entering God's temple (presence)?

#### **Digging Deeper**

How does praise shift if you are doing it all the time, no matter where you are, since you are part of the temple of the Lord (1 Corinthians 3:16)?

The psalmist now gives his threefold rationale for making a joyful noise unto the Lord. First, *the Lord is good* (Psalm 106:1; 118:1; 125:3; ...etc.) Second God is everlastingly *merciful*. It is frequent refrain in the Psalm that *His mercy endures forever* (c.f. Psalm 118:1-4, 29; 136:1-26). Third, a joyful noise is to be made unto the lord God, *for his faithfulness continues through all generations*. He is God: He does not change.

Because God's faithfulness endures to *all generations*, Psalm 100 points to the future. The countless experiences of the people with God illustrate divine faithfulness. The people's worship should recall those experiences. It should also express their confidence that such faithfulness awaits their descendants.

Even today from generation to generation, the Lord can be trusted (Romans 15:9; Ephesians 2:4). It is significant that the fathers' and mothers' worship today will have an important influence on their children tomorrow. If we are controlled by the Holy Spirit of God and the holy Word of God, we will reveal it in the way we worship God. Instead of imitating the world, we will be led by the Word and the Spirit to be joyful in the Lord, submissive to the Lord, and thankful to the Lord, and the world will see the difference.

### **4. What reasons did the psalmist give for praising the Lord? (Psalm 100:5)**

#### **What Do You Think?**

How can you see God's faithfulness in your family's history?

#### **Digging Deeper**

What stories should you pass on to younger generations so that God's faithfulness to your family will be known?

#### **POINTS TO PONDER**

1. Always make a joyful noise unto the Lord. (Psalm 100:1)
2. Have the right heart and mindset (gratefulness) when serving the Lord. (Psalm 100:2)
3. God is the creator of all, and caretaker of all. (Psalm 100:3)
4. Remember to give God thanks for your blessings. (Psalm 100:4)
5. God is merciful and faithful to us time after time, after time. (Psalm 100:5)

#### **CONCLUSION**

#### **Because He Is**

Psalm 100 concludes a group of psalms by inviting all human beings to worship God in the joyful knowledge that He loves them and will care for them. Because of who He is and what He does for us, He is certainly worthy of our joyful thanks!

### **PRAYER**

Our God and King, You are enthroned in the highest heaven and in the heart of the humblest person. You alone are God, and You have made us in wonderful ways. Help us to celebrate what You have done, are doing, and will do for all Your creation as You sustain and bless all the things You have made. Help us to recall who we are, Your treasured people, so that we may invite others into that same sense of belonging. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### **THOUGHT TO REMEMBER**

Know that the Lord is God and praise Him accordingly!

### **ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON**

Next week's lesson is "God's Promised Presence" where we will learn how God's boundless wisdom and presence provides solace to believers. Study Psalm 139:1-12.