

Lesson for October 3, 2021, "Make A Joyful Noise"

Background Scripture: Psalm 100

Is there a song for every occasion? The right songs enhance any event, imprint memories more deeply into our minds, and make even everyday moments more special. In the Bible, the book of Psalms serves as "the songbook of God's people."

There are several categories of psalms to fit every situation. Laments lift up hard things to God and ask for his intervention. Wisdom psalms echo ideas from the other Wisdom books (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon), and prophetic psalms are resonant with the messages of the prophets. Royal psalms, relate to the Messiah, who was foreshadowed by King David. Many, psalms are centered around praise and thanksgiving. Psalm 100 falls in this category.

Psalm 100 is the last of a grouping of eight psalms that share the phrase: "The LORD reigns." 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.

Psalm 100 invites "all the earth" to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord." An invitation is extended to everyone to join in the exuberant praise.

The same word is used in the Prophetic books when God's people are given Messianic hope for the future:

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey." (Zechariah 9:9)

Tony Evans puts it this way in his commentary: "Let the whole earth shout triumphantly to God! People are to engage in it with a sense of excitement. You can't worship the Lord without your emotions. It is no mere intellectual exercise. Worship is for the whole earth. All peoples are invited to join the celebration. No one is left out. Worship is all that we are responding to, all that he is. It is the recognition of God for who he is, what he has done, and what we are trusting him to do."

Those who follow God can allow Him into all the circumstances of their lives, not only the happy ones. God is present and can be talked with, in overwhelming times (Psalm 88), in sorrow for sin (Psalm 51), interpersonal conflict (Psalm 41), depression (Psalm 42), doubt (Psalm 77), and there are more. All of these psalms, though they contain raw and painful emotions, have something in common: turning toward God and remembering his character and promises. And that remembrance leads to rejoicing, even if it is only a hushed and expectant flicker.

We can express Thanksgiving to God every day. Mediate on God's character. God makes Himself known on the pages of Scripture, revealing Himself to be faithful, and generous, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Studying the character or the names (which reveal His character) of God with a formal study could be helpful, but simply reading the Bible with the question, "What does this passage tell me about who God is?" will also help us get

to know Him better, and this will lead to joy that we are in an eternal relationship with such good father, faithful friend, and mighty God. Psalm 100 and the psalms surrounding it focus on, "The LORD reigns." This means that He is in charge and His will is going to come to pass. We can take comfort in the fact that we know this King, and He is good.

Mediate on God's promises. God always keeps His promises. We do not have to wonder about His faithfulness. Hebrews 10:23 says: "He who promised is faithful." God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?" The answer to these rhetorical questions that are posed in Psalm 77, is "No." "All the promises of God find their Yes in, Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

The promises of God are too numerous to name, and some have not yet been fulfilled, but our hope that they will be fulfilled is sure and steadfast as we wait for the fulfillment of all things according to the timing of the one who is "not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

When we are feeling joyful, songs of hope can enhance our joy. When we are feeling tempted to despair, songs of hope can refocus our eyes on the source of our hope and rekindle a flicker of rejoicing in our hearts.

The psalms, including Psalm 100, encourage us to be joyful in the Lord and to express that joy in the form of praise and thanksgiving. This rejoicing does not have to be merely springing from our circumstances but is rooted and sustained in the enduring character and promises of God that give us hope even in our darkest days. Through meditating and singing about who God is and what He has promised, we can "Rejoice in the Lord

always; again I will say, rejoice” because “the Lord is at hand” (Philippians 4:4-5).

Closing: For the love that casts out fear, the faith that sustains and the hope that never perishes, be with us now and forever more. Amen.

Next week’s lesson October 10, 2021, “Praise God For Justice and Righteousness”

Background Scripture: Psalm 9, and Ecclesiastes 3:16-22

Sources for this lesson: The Bible, International Sunday School Commentary, Adult Sunday School Lessons, by Jessica Udall, Crosswalk Faith Bible Study, and The Present Word Lesson.