

We who live in the United States should be the happiest and the most thankful people on earth. Let's face it, in this country affluence abounds. Most families have several vehicles. Most families own a home and some own more than one home. Most who own homes have homes filled with gadgets and appliances and TV sets and telephones that are all designed to make life easier. We have so much food that sometimes we have to clean out our refrigerators and throw it away. Life in the United States is a good life.

One question worth asking is why aren't we the happiest people on earth? It is the rare individual that you see who is thankful and happy. This is not only true for unsaved lost people, but this is also true for many who go to church. If you take a look at the majority of people going to church, they do not seem to be rejoicing. The fact is some come with long, sad faces that never seem to be joyful about anything.

God wants His people coming to worship Him with thankful and joyful hearts and minds. **Psalm 100 is a Thanksgiving Psalm. Psalm 100 is "A Psalm for giving grateful praise."** It is the only Psalm that classifies itself this way in the superscription. This Psalm has been written for a "thanksgiving" purpose. In fact, Jewish Rabbis teach that this Psalm is specifically applicable for Israel when offering a thanksgiving offering.

The point of the Psalm is easy to see:

**GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE BEEN COMMANDED BY GOD TO JOYFULLY AND THANKFULLY WORSHIP GOD AND SERVE GOD BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS.**

We do not know who actually wrote this Psalm, but whomever it was, he had a majestic view of God and also he had a positive view of worship. Now if we place this Psalm after Psalm 99, which clearly establishes that the LORD reigns (99:1), we would suggest that this will be the joyful thanksgiving Psalm that will be sung to Him, about Him and for Him.

God wants His people to be happy, not miserable. People who worship God should be happy people. They should be happy about worshipping God. God wants His people gathering to worship Him, not as some sad group who doesn't appear to have a friend in the world.

Now there are seven commands given in this Psalm:

**COMMAND #1 – Shout joyfully to the LORD. 100:1**

It appears that this could be a private command rather than a public command because this joyful shouting comes before corporate entering (v. 4).

Actually the verb "shout" is a word that means to make a loud noise (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 762). Most often it is used of crying out loudly because of something joyful. The specific cry is for all the earth to shout joyfully to the LORD. As one student said, "Every country should shout to God."

I do find it interesting that this word is used of one who also cries out after experiencing some piercing pain or injury. It is very possible that the reason for the joyful shout is due to the fact that God has delivered one from the pain. God has taken away the injury. Certainly after the Great Tribulation is over, all the earth will be able to shout joyfully to the LORD. I think it thrills the heart of God when He sees His people joyfully and personally shouting out just to Him - “thank you”; “Praise God”; “Fantastic”; “Great.”

**COMMAND #2** – Serve the LORD with gladness. **100:2a**

Augustine said this Psalm clearly teaches that God never wants his people serving him with bitterness or murmuring. One who is thankful is one who serves, and God wants one who serves to serve Him with gladness. God wants His people serving Him with happy and holy hearts. There is nothing worse than someone who serves as a whiner, doubter and complainer. It zaps the life out of everyone.

Now I want to point out something we need to see. When we are involved in serving in the local church, we are involved in what God classifies as “serving the LORD.” In whatever capacity we serve, whether it is singing, giving, teaching or helping, we are not serving people; we are not serving the Church, we are not serving the Board; we are serving God and we are to serve God with gladness.

God does not want His people serving Him begrudgingly, but joyfully. Often people will start something or promise something and then quit or not follow through. Apparently they have forgotten who it is they are serving.

**COMMAND #3** – Come before the LORD with joyful singing. **100:2b**

God not only pays careful attention to what we sing, but also how we sing. God wants us to sing joyfully. We need to be joyful people. We need to be upbeat, not a deadbeat. The truth is if you are positive and upbeat, often you will stand up and stand out. Many times that will lead you to witnessing opportunities.

**COMMAND #4** – Know that the LORD is God. **100:3**

Now don't overlook this, the verse begins with the word “know.” Worship that is pleasing to God is based on knowledge. It is based on knowing truth about God. This idea that worship is some emotional out of mind feeling does not square with God's Word. Now when we come before God, there are three facts we need to know:

**Fact #1** - We must know that the LORD Himself is God. **100:3a**

What this means is that we should always acknowledge that God is the only Sovereign, Triune God who is the Self-Existing glorious God worthy of worship.

As one commentator said, “We should appreciate the fact that Yahweh is the sovereign God” (Thomas Constable, *Psalms*, p. 216). **I am of the opinion that the first thing we must know when we go to worship God is that God is sovereign and majestic and we are not. True worship elevates God, not man.**

**Fact #2** - We must know that the LORD made us. **100:3b**

If you really believe this, you have no reason for pride in life or in worship. We did not make ourselves. Most people want to exalt themselves as if they are self-made. But the fact is, as B. F. Westcott said, when we realize this point, “with bowed heads and open heart, may we offer ourselves. We can do no more, and we dare do no less.” The obvious point is that we must know that we are made by God and not self-made.

Evolution is a slap in the face against God. In fact, one real underlying motive is that we evolved so we don't have to worship God, we can worship ourselves and what we make of ourselves. But God's Word says otherwise. We must know that it is the LORD who made us.

There are two realities here:

**(Reality #1)** - God made us physically.

Our physical life has been designed and ordained by God. God takes full credit for permitting us to live in this world. Even though He used physical people to conceive us, He authorized our conception.

**(Reality #2)** - God made us spiritually.

God saved us; we did not save ourselves. God chose us; He elected us and He expects when we gather to worship Him, we acknowledge this reality.

Philip Melancthon was very sad over his son's death back in 1559. He said that this verse revived him. If God is the creator, then He is the owner. He concluded that his son would not have had any existence without God, but he had his existence because of God.

**Fact #3** - We must know that we are God's sheep in His pasture. **100:3c**

One of the big problems in America is that many tend to think their fate and success are in their own hands. **People are not thankful to God if they really believe they earned everything they have the hard way.** We are sheep and we are in God's pasture, not our pasture.

It is important to know that we belong to God and everything we have He graciously has provided for us. It is a blessed and rare privilege to be singled out as a sheep of God. This is true for the nation Israel and this is true for us as individuals. God is the One who made us His sheep and He is the One who cares for us in His pasture.

It is impossible for people to honor God if they truly think God if they think they own themselves and have accomplished everything on their own.

**COMMAND #5** – Enter His property with thanksgiving and praise. **100:4a**

The gates were the gate doorways that led to the place of worship. Now the gates and courts refer to the Tabernacle of God and ultimately the Temple of God, which is the place of corporate worship. When God's people go to worship, they should go with hearts that are thankful to God and hearts that desire to praise God.

There should be a sense of awe and reverence and thankfulness that Almighty God would permit us to enter into His presence.

**COMMAND #6** – Give thanks to God. **100:4b**

God deserves our thanks and our praise. When we consider the many blessings He has given to us, how can we help but thank Him and praise Him.

Notice two times here in **verse 4**, the emphasis is on giving thanks to God or being thankful to God. **Apparently the admonition is much needed because it is much neglected.** As the Church Age winds down, a spirit of ingratitude will intensify. One who is thankful to God for all God has done is one who worships God with a proper heart.

**COMMAND #7** – Bless the name of God. **100:4c**

Now there are three reasons why we should obey these commands:

**Reason #1** - Because the LORD is good. **100:5a**

God is good. God does good things. God gives good things. God blesses with good blessings. God is to be worshipped and praised because He is good.

**Reason #2** - Because the LORD'S mercy and lovingkindness is everlasting. **100:5b**

Spurgeon said it is the mercy of God that would let anyone enter the gate of God. Right here is a motive for thanking God forever—God's mercy does not run out ever. God's mercy and loving-kindness is forever. God knew what He was getting when He chose us to be His sheep. It was His grace and mercy that made us His sheep.

**Reason #3** - Because the LORD's Faithfulness is to all generations. **100:5c**

For the past several thousand years, God has been good to people in all generations. God has been good even to those who have mocked him.

This is one powerful statement. Certainly there is an application for every generation of Israel, but there is also an application to every generation of all people of all time.

Every generation of people have received benefits and blessings from God. Every generation of people, even God-mocking people, have experienced God's goodness.

**PRACTICAL LESSONS:**

- 1. Be thankful for everything God has given you and every day thank Him for something.**
- 2. Come to corporate worship with a joyful attitude to hear from God and learn about God and to sing to God and give to God.**
- 3. Praise and thank God for His grace and mercy which is always with you.**