

Psalm 100
June 14, 2020

Grace and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen.

¹ Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.

² Worship the LORD with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.

³ Know that the LORD is God.

It is he that 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 (NRSV)

5 short verses. A beautiful hymn of praise. A timeless masterpiece. So are the words of Psalm 100. So much depth found in so few words. Indeed sometimes, less is better. Less animosity. Less hatred. Less greed. Less division. Less war. Less jealousy. Less turmoil and tribulation. Less wastefulness of the natural resources God created and entrusted us to care for and manage responsibly.

But let us not get mistaken by the brevity of the psalter's words because while short, they leap off the page with an abundance of good news and an outbreak of jubilation. The root in which this fruitful melody blossoms from is laid out clearly in verse 3 – The Lord is God. It is God who made us. We are God's.

Some weeks it becomes evident quickly which passage speaks to a pastor and needs to be proclaimed. In a similar fashion, over the years I have heard from many of you how a verse or two or three has suddenly surfaced to the forefront of your mind bringing near the presence of the Lord who is good and whose love endures forever. It seems many of those moments are when we most need it. When we are experiencing hardship, doubt, angst, or grief. Those verses or a psalm the likes we have before us today are the anchor of grace that see us through those seasons of life we all experience and cradle us in the loving arms of the One who calls all the earth to make a joyful noise.

It was nine years ago this past Thursday I was installed as the pastor of Bethany and it was just a handful of weeks prior to that installation I recall standing among the faithful, wonderful, and caring people of God for the first time, nervous, excited, grateful. I was invited to lead a short devotion and it was the words from Psalm 100 the Spirit guided me to speak and as I went back to look for that message, I was unable to locate it. Yet, I probably do not need it because the words of Psalm 100 are, in my opinion, a guidebook to our life together as God's people. I envisioned then and I envision now the love of Christ flowing through the veins of our bodies and the branches that connect us to one another lead us to respond just as the psalter called the people of Israel and all of earth to respond. Notice the verbal language in these 5 verses. A movement from the knowledge that God created us. God is the source of all life. We are God's.

- Make a joyful noise to the Lord
- Worship the Lord with gladness
- Come before the Lord with singing
- Enter God's courts with praise
- Give thanks to the Lord and bless God's name.

This is a pattern of life as God intends for God's people. These verbs and all that surround them are not simply words on a page but rather they are a revelation as to who God is and what God's desire and will for creation is. All earth. All creatures. All people. All are called to make a joyful noise because God is good. That word good takes us back to the first chapter of Genesis we heard proclaimed last Sunday. Seven times as the story of creation is told we hear God take stock of all God created and express it was good, very good. Seven is significant because it represents completion and perfection. Just as God is good, perfect, complete so was God's design for creation. So is God's will for our life together.

The thrust of these verbs is not merely suggestive but rather they are imperative. A way of life all earth is to live out. But sadly, we know that is not always the song the world sings. It is not always the melody the church marches to. We forget whose we are. We fail to see the goodness in one another. We are too quick to judge and put ourselves in the position of God. We say all are welcome but then fail in doing so. We all too easily point out the sin in a brother or sister but struggle to remember Paul's grace-filled words to the church in Rome, "while we were still sinners Christ died for us," which is the good news of Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd who came to rescue us from our sin, separation from God and one another, and free us yet again to make a joyful noise along with all earth, worship the Lord with gladness, come before him with singing, enter his courts with praise and give thanks always.

I realize the call to come before our Lord with a joyful noise and singing presently brings with it grief because it is not safe to do so in a group setting. It is appropriate to lament this, because we recall there are many lament psalms, a book called Lamentations, and Ecclesiastes reminds

us there is a time, a season, to weep and to mourn. Yet, our grief is transformed into joy by the God who has freed us from the power of sin and death. Our voices will sing on through our actions and calling to proclaim the good news that the kingdom of heaven has come near. There is an indeed an outbreak of jubilation that flows forth in endless song. It takes shape, manifests itself, and sounds like the joys of: hope, equality, life, solidarity, love, justice, generosity, forgiveness, unity, compassion, healing, wholeness, and the knowledge that we are God's. God made us. God is good! Amen.