

Call to Worship and a Warning

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Preacher: Steve Woodman

[0:00] Please turn with me in your Bibles to Psalm 95. After we read Psalm 95 and pray, I'm glad to welcome to our pulpit this morning, Pastor Steve Woodman.

! Brother, take our greetings back to your family and to your church there. Thank them for giving you up for a weekend for us. Let's turn now to the reading of God's Word.

And please stand together with me for that reading from Psalm 95. Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord. Let us shout aloud to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song. For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods. In His hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to Him.

The sea is His, for He made it, and His hands formed a dry land. Come, let us bow down in worship. Let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker, for He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, the flock under His care.

[1:08] Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massa in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did.

For forty years I was angry with that generation. I said, there are people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways. So I declared on oath in my anger, they shall never enter my rest.

Before I have you turn, well, you can go ahead and turn to Psalm 95, or maybe you're already still there. That's where we're going to be spending our time with the Lord's blessing here this morning. I know there were a number of you that were not in a Sunday school service, so I just wanted to briefly bring our greetings from Kemp Road Baptist Church. I know that I personally and a number from our church have felt a connection with your church for some time.

I personally have been encouraged by Pastor John. I've had a long-time friendship with Pastor Aaron. I went to church with Ed and Judy's daughter in Owensboro, and just all kinds of fun with your congregation over the years in different ways.

[2:19] Seeing people at general assemblies, and I was able to be at Aaron's ordination probably six, seven years ago. So even though I don't see you often, I do love you in the Lord, and our church, I think, feels a connection, a fellowship in the gospel with you.

And to top all of that, I stayed at one point with LaVanche. And once you've done that, there's just no going back. Some of you have asked about my wife and kids.

Up until about three days ago, we planned to bring them, but my daughter got a cold, and my wife had been doing a lot of ministry recently, and we made the hard decision to leave them home. I wish in some ways that they were here and they could spend time with you as well.

One thing I didn't mention that I wanted to ask you for prayer about is kind of a big deal. I just ran out of time and forgot about it, but we're actually in the middle of an adoption from Rwanda right now, and Lord willing, we're asking to bring two children home from there.

We've requested a girl under 18 months and a boy under 36 months, and then I think we'll be done. But if you weren't in Sunday school, we adopted a girl from China in 2006, and she's currently four, and then we have our biological son who'll be 11 next month.

[3:46] Well, thank you for having us, or having me, I guess it's just me. Thank you for having me today, and now let's ask the Lord's help, and then we'll look at this passage that Pastor Aaron just read for us.

Our Father God, as we come to your word, we would readily admit to you that if it were not for your Holy Spirit, this would mean nothing to us.

It would not profit us if you did not open our eyes, give us eyes to see and ears to hear, and the desire to know you. So we pray, Lord, that for the next while, as we consider this psalm from your Holy Word, that you would work in our hearts, whether we are believers or not, send your Spirit, Lord, to work in our midst, to apply this passage to our hearts and minds, and forever change us, because we have encountered your word today.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. I don't know if you have ever sung that song, that chorus, Come, let us worship and bow down. You know, that's one of the most beautiful invitations that anyone could ever be given, and yet the Lord himself has to enable us to be able to even answer that call.

And in the middle of Psalm 95, we have the verses where that chorus comes from, O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker, for He is our God.

[5:19] I'm going to be using the New King James this morning, so things will be a little different, but I think quite similar as well, but just thought I'd let you know that. Well, let's take a look at this psalm.

I think you can generally divide this psalm into a call to worship God in the first half of Psalm 95, and then interestingly enough, the second half of this psalm is a warning against rebellion.

I don't know if you've ever seen this in your Christian experience, but it seems like, I don't know if it's because we don't like doctrine in our day or exactly what it is, but we like to pick out favorite verses or phrases from the psalms and kind of camp on those.

But what's interesting is when you go to the scriptures and just kind of let it speak for itself, a lot of times you'll find some unusual combinations that almost strike us as unique because we're used to, you know, just picking out those favorite sentiments.

Well, there are some very beautiful things in the psalms. There are also some very challenging things in the psalms, and in this chapter, we're going to see actually both. There's a call to worship that is glorious and joyous and the kind of thing that we would love to gather around here as the people of God here this morning.

[6:41] But the second half of the psalm is a serious warning against rebellion, the kind of rebellion that was seen in the wilderness. So that's how I'm going to organize my thoughts this morning.

First of all, looking at this call to worship God and then looking at that warning against rebellion. And as we consider this call to worship God, what you're struck with when you consider the first six or seven verses is, and you've heard this before, but that's okay because we need to hear the things we've heard before.

We're struck with who God is and what He has done. Now, what I want to challenge you with this morning is not so much, you know, this is all going to be new stuff that you've not heard and you're going to go away with kind of a wow thing going on.

But rather, what I want you to do is I want you to consider this truth and ask yourself, am I living my life in light of these truths? Have you heard of the term practical atheism?

Those are the people that live as if God did not exist. You and I can live like practical atheists. We can know the Lord, we can be saved, we can be part of the redeemed, and yet we can, from time to time, from moment to moment or day to day, we have periods where we live as if God did not exist, as if He really isn't who the Scriptures declare Him to be.

[8:12] So as we work through this psalm, what I want you to do is ask yourself, am I living my life in light of these truths that I may very well have heard before but need to hear once again?

So we're going to consider then who God is and what He has done. This psalm puts forth to us an accurate view of the great God.

We need to know who He is instead of trying to stir ourselves up to worship what we don't know. I think the best thing to do is to take a look at an accurate view of who God is and then the praise will be actually quite natural for the worshiper's heart.

We can come and sing to the Lord if we know who He is. So what I would like to do as we consider first of all this call to worship God is try to work through an accurate view of Him.

Consider who He is and what He has done. So I'm going to gather my thoughts like this. I'm going to go through the first half of the psalm and think through with you who God is according to what is set forth here.

[9:21] Then we're going to go back and we're going to look at what God does according to the first half of the psalm. And we're going to consider then what our response ought to be to who He is and what He does.

And then, Lord willing, finish with the warning in the second half. Okay, so let's take a look at who He is. He's called the Lord in verse 1. It's a good place to start.

Jehovah is the self-existent or the eternal one. He's the great I am. There is no other. Now, like I said, you've heard that before.

But here's a question for you. When it comes down to the way you live your life, this past week, for instance, have you been living your life as if there is one God to whom we must give account?

Have you been living your life understanding that you're living it before the gaze of the self-existent one, the one who has no equal, no one like Him?

[10:27] Or, as is so common, it seems like in our hearts, have you been creating your own gods, having things on the heart throne that are not this God?

So, you end up divided. In your mind, you know, in your intellect, you say, I believe in God. I believe in Jehovah God. Pastor John, Pastor Aaron, Pastor Bob, and others have set this before me before. But perhaps the more urgent question is, have you in this past week been living your life with this God on your heart throne?

There are so many ways that our hearts can create other gods or put something in front of this self-existent one that we end up worshiping instead of Him.

And it takes an ongoing, constant relationship with the Lord and with His Word to say, search me and know me, try me, and see if there is any wicked way in me.

[11:35] As we come to worship this Lord, we need to come with hearts of renewed repentance and say to Him, Lord, I want to worship You.

But I think maybe I've been guilty at times this past week of having other things actually be more important than You. Who is our God?

He is the Eternal One, the Great I Am. But let's make sure that He is actually the One on our thrones. He is also called the Rock of our Salvation in verse 1.

And in Old Testament imagery, the Rock was the place of strength, deliverance, or safety. And because of the way the land was in Israel, this meant something that perhaps it wouldn't mean in Bremen because of the lay of the land, the topography.

Barnes says about this concept of the rock that in times of danger, a lofty rock would be sought as a place of safety. Men would fly to it to escape from their enemies.

[12:43] Such rocks abound in Palestine and by the fact that they are elevated and difficult of access, or by the fact that those who fled to them could find shelter behind their projecting crags, or by the fact that they could find security in their deep and dark caverns, they became places of refuge in times of danger.

And protection was often found there when it could not be found in the plains below. So that's one of the reasons why you have Jesus Christ set before us as the Rock of our salvation.

Because He is our refuge and our strength, a shelter in the time of storm, the safety from the enemies who are maybe pursuing us on the plains, but we find refuge and safety and we are able to be hidden in the rock, in the cleft of the rock.

This might possibly be here in this psalm also an allusion to the rock and the wilderness that God used to provide the Israelites with water. And in that case, then, there would also be the application of provision from the Lord.

The Apostle Paul says that that rock is a picture of Christ. That rock. And really, when you think about it, all of this imagery of the rock points us to Christ.

[14:08] Everything you could say about the rock here in verse 1 that would be by way of imagery could be spoken of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This rock is the foundation of our spiritual hope, our security from righteous judgment upon sin, protection from our enemies.

Who is this God? He is the self-existent one, the rock of our salvation. He is called, in verse 3, the great God. The great God.

Now, this is significant. To us, at first glance, this term might seem to be just kind of like another way of saying he's awesome, he's big, he's capable, there's no one like him.

But for Israel, this would have had another application. In the mind of the Israelite, they understood that sometimes the nations around them associated the God with the nation.

[15:15] So, their thinking would go something like this. let's say, for instance, that, let's take the nation of Egypt. If they had a big, powerful nation, then the thinking would go, Egypt must have a

big, or a number of big, powerful gods.

So, they would look at Israel, nations would look at Israel, and they would say, if you look at Israel, the size of Israel, the strength of Israel, the puniness of Israel, they must have a wee little God that's not capable of very much at all.

Israel had to be reminded. Do you and I ever have to be reminded of who our God really is? Are we ever in danger of being affected by the thinking around us and the attacks that come against our God?

Do you ever struggle in your own heart with doubt and faith about who your God is? Well, I think we would be similar to Israel in this way. They were tempted, and we know this from Scripture, right? They were tempted to go after other gods, to think that their God was not sufficient, that their God was not who he said he was. And so, when he is called the great God and the king above all gods, part of the idea there is that we start first with the concept of God before we move to the concept of God's people.

[16:58] We don't create a God or imagine a God based on the people. We understand God to be who has revealed himself to be, and then we're thankful, as we see a little bit later here.

We're thankful to be his people. But we don't make him who he is. So, while some nations might think, small nation, small God, just an inferior deity who is over an inferior nation, the psalmist here is encouraging worshipers to believe the truth about the one true God.

Jehovah is God, there is no other, and you, Israel, did not make your God. God made you and everyone else.

Jehovah is not good because he belongs to Israel. Israel was blessed because they belonged to Jehovah. We have to be very careful that we start with God and then allow him to speak to us concerning ourselves.

Don't start with ourselves and then somehow come to some conclusion concerning who he is, but the Israelites were tempted to do that and I think maybe sometimes we are as well.

[18:12] He is, in verse 3, mentioned to be the great king above all gods. He is the great king over angels. He created them.

If you want to consider that, perhaps to refer to angels. He is the great king over demons, fallen angels. He's their creator as well.

He's the great king over princes and kings and any earthly person. He created them. We know the apostle Paul tells us very clearly he gave them their power.

And when you think about it, the made up idols and false gods don't really even count because we have to consider them to either be non-existent or demonic. And we've already talked about that. God is the great king above all gods, whatever you might consider that to be. Angels, demons, princes, judges, he is over them all.

[19:18] There is no one that is even in the same category as our great king. In verse 6, he's called our maker. Have you ever spent some time just thinking about that?

that's another one of those things that we say it, we hear it, we sing it so often, but it can do us good to just sit on that for a little bit. He made us.

He is our maker. Immediately, when you hear this phrase, if you're thinking about it at all, your heart should be drawn out to humble worship. He has given us our very existence.

He is the creator. sometimes it's helpful to work through some of these psalms and just meditate on them, you know, Selah, think about it, chew it over, and meditate on those things because it's easy. We hear these things so much in our music and in the scriptures themselves. We want to make sure that we don't fly right past the concept. He is my creator and I am responsible to him.

[20:25] I am accountable to him since he made it all. He is the one who determines how it's all going to go down. Our very existence as humans as well as our existence as his people.

It's his doing. And really, I think those of you who know the Lord this morning, we could look at it in both of those ways. First of all, he created us as physical beings, but second of all, he made us into the people of God.

He is responsible for this. Have you ever thought about how funny the local church actually even is? Where else are you going to see a group of people like, excuse me, but all of you from hither, thither, and yon all in this place here this morning?

Why? Why? What's the connection? What makes you with your personalities and your strengths and weaknesses and your besetting sins and living from in this place and that place and different

vocations?

What brings you to this place here in this house of worship here and binds you together? Our maker.

[21 : 42] Our maker. He has made you into a local family of God as well as been responsible for your very existence as a human being.

And you know, one of the most blessed phrases, and this is the last one I'm going to point you to, is found in verse 7 where he is called our God. And again, at first glance, it just sounds like, oh, it looks like a possessive pronoun and a noun to me.

It's not all that big of a deal. But when you think about who is doing, who is, in a sense, taking possession of God, God has given us this blessed privilege of, in a sense, having him to be our God.

He is ours and we are his. Those are some pretty significant possessive pronouns. We are his and he is ours.

He entered into covenant with us. He decided for his own glory that he was going to send his son to die to redeem us for his own sake and for his own glory.

[22 : 48] He has made us his people. He has made us his. Now, I know there's a context here in Psalm 95 that would apply to the nation of Israel, but I believe that these truths run into the New Testament and into the redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And if you're familiar at all with the book of Hebrews, you know that the last half of this psalm is quoted almost in its entirety in the book of Hebrews. This is, I believe, talking about us as well, the church.

God's people. If you know the Lord this morning, I want you to consider yourself to be blessed and think about this strong personal element that's expressed here.

We, I, am a person of his pasture. I am one of the sheep under his care, in his hand.

He is my shepherd. He loves his sheep, we're told. The Lord Jesus Christ gave himself for the sheep.

[23 : 56] He prays for his sheep. He has a tender, loving, nurturing, care for his sheep. No one can pluck us out of the Father's hand.

Just dwell on this thought and it will do your heart good. He is our God. We are the people of his pasture and we are the sheep under his care.

He personally shepherds us and leads us. You know, I don't know what kind of a personality you have. I don't know a lot of you that well, but maybe some of you have a tender spirit and when you hear or read something that is rebuking, you take it to heart, you want to repent, but sometimes it can almost crush you and you struggle.

Am I really the Lord? Does he really love me? Could he really be my shepherd? Does he actually care about the hairs of my head?

Or is this more of a general thing? Well, it certainly is a general thing in the sense of the church at large, but if you consider the way the Lord Jesus Christ dealt with his disciples, I think, for instance, of Peter.

[25 : 23] I relate to Peter. You think about Peter denying his Lord just when Christ is ready to go to the cross, but it's not that long later that you see Christ restoring Peter and gently bringing him back and nurturing him.

Our salvation is the work of God. And even though I don't want to diminish those passages that speak to us human accountability and responsibility, and in fact, the second part of this psalm takes us there, but it's his grace that brings us into his fold.

It's his grace that keeps us in the fold. And I want you to know this morning, you, the individual sheep of God, that if you know him, he personally and intimately loves and cares for you.

And that is the clear teaching of God's word. Not because of anything that you or I have done, not by any works of righteousness, but by his mercy.

He saved us. And we can say along with the psalmist in 48, 14, for this is God, our God, forever and ever, he will be our guide even to death.

[26 : 53] Well, this is just a snapshot of who our God is. Consider with me briefly what he does. In verse five, we know he creates.

And this goes back to the idea of him being maker. And this is another one of those concepts. I want to encourage you, if you ever go somewhere on vacation and you have the opportunity to see

some really beautiful territory, or even when you're just driving through the fields this time of year and you see the leaves turning, take some of the psalms with you.

Take a psalm like this, where it says that in his hand are the deep places of the earth, the heights of the hills are his also. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

Sometimes you have the opportunity and living here in the Midwest, maybe they don't come as often as you would like, but you know what I'm talking about, that time when you go to Colorado, or you go to the Grand Canyon, or you go to the ocean, and in a unique and particular way, you get to see some part of God's creation that you don't generally see in the general course of your life.

And in a time like that, take these Psalms with you, and allow those opportunities to instruct you, and teach your heart afresh, and think to yourself, God made this.

[28 : 21] And there are a number of things that should just blow you away. One is the sheer immensity of things like space, and oceans, and the sky, but then you should also be blown away by the beauty, the design, the order that we see in all of creation.

What a wonderful thing to take a psalm like this with you into that experience and remind yourself in a very vivid way how powerful and how orderly and creative and how unique our creator God is.

I was talking with Pastor Aaron a number of years ago. I had the first opportunity ever to go to Arizona, and it was for one of the general assemblies that was out there, the first one here not too long ago.

And I just could not imagine going to Arizona and not seeing something. So I took the weekend afterward, and I went to the Grand Canyon, and I fellowshiped with the church up there in Prescott. The Grand Canyon will just remind you like a number of other things of how small you and I really are, and how big our God is. And that's just really one part of the earth, which is just one part of an immense universe.

[29 : 46] And I guess there are a number of those. But it's just amazing. You can stand watching the Grand Canyon. You know when you're at the ocean there's movement, and there's seagulls and different things to kind of watch.

But what was interesting is you almost feel at the Grand Canyon like there's movement. There's so much, and there's so many different crevices and shadows. As the sun moves, it's almost moving in front of you, and it's so amazing and immense.

you think, this is from the hand of the great God. In His hand is the Grand Canyon of the West.

He creates. We've already said that He made us, but He has made everything that there is, land and sea. We know that He sustains what He creates, especially in verse 4.

We see if in His hand are the deep places of the earth, that's more than just creation going on here. There's a providential control over it as well. I wonder if sometimes we really understand what it means to sustain what He created, even though sin has entered in and has done a number on creation, so to speak.

[31 : 07] Still, for God to sustain all of that which He created is amazing and requires the same power of the one and only God, really, that it did for Him to create. I think in the mind of Israel, there are probably a couple of other things going on here as well.

As we're thinking about God being creator and sustainer and all that He does in the life of His people, do you really think that Israel could ever hear something about a hill and not think about Mount Sinai?

Or hear about a sea and not think about the Red Sea? And if you're hearing a worship leader such as we have writing this psalm for us, when you hear something about Him having the seas in His hand, how vivid would that have been for the nation of Israel who could remember the history of their own people when God just pulled back the waters to allow them to escape Pharaoh?

And that instance became such a part of the foundation of the people of Israel's history that forever after, you see throughout Revelation, you see references to the Red Sea and to Mount Sinai and to those pinnacle events in the life of that nation.

And so for them, not only are they thinking about in general God sustains what He made, but God has His hands around the ocean in such a way, around the seas in such a way that He can providentially pull it back and form walls if He wants to.

[32 : 34] How humbling that would be for them especially at that point to have seen and heard that. Yet even though God does not choose in our lives to pull back the walls of a sea, are there things that you and I can look at and say, see what God has done?

There is no other explanation but that God has His hands around my life and is sustaining and ordaining all that occurs.

God's presence, God's omnipotence, God's power is seen. He rules and presides and presides in the world. Take these truths, these psalms with you and think about creation and sustenance at the hand of God.

So if you have the opportunity to go to Tennessee or even China and you think, wow, all over this globe, God's presence, God's omnipotence, God's creative and sustaining power is seen.

He rules and presides over everything that He has made. And I want to encourage you with the idea that this is one of those truths that I think is really brought home by meditation.

[33 : 47] If you fly through it and just read over it, it's going to be hard to appreciate it. But if you stop and you think and you apply it to where you are in your particular situation, I think it can do your soul great good.

We often talk about God as creator, redeemer, sustainer, those kinds of things, but to actually take these truths with you outside while you're enjoying the rivers, the canyons, mountains, oceans, lakes and wildlife can give it fresh meaning.

Well, God creates, He sustains briefly. We know He redeems and I think that's intimated here in this text. We see Him described to us as the rock of our salvation.

He is certainly seen even in the Old Covenant as Redeemer. He is our God. There's an implication there of our covenant God, the one who is really providing for salvation all through the covenants of the Old Testament.

And we also have this picture at the end of the psalm of His provision of eternal rest that is symbolized by the Canaan rest. So we see God in this psalm, I believe, as Redeemer.

[34 : 58] And certainly we see Him here as judge. Because as we, in a few minutes, work our way toward the end of this psalm, we see that in God's holy wrath, there are some who are denied rest because they do not believe.

This was true of Canaan, people heading to Canaan, as well as of the eternal rest because of the sin and rebellion of people who do not know His ways.

So we see God as the one who hands forth the sentence as well. The one who decides righteousness. The one who really embodies righteousness.

And we know that whatever violates His commands and His character is wickedness. He is the judge. He is the one who establishes right and wrong.

He is the one. You know, one of the things that's consoling to me about this is that in our day, as really it's been all throughout the history of the earth, there have been injustices. Things that are not right.

[35 : 59] Things that should be another way. And we see it in our own lives and in our country. But we know that one day, everything will be made right. Everyone will bow before this judge.

And everything will be seen as it really should be seen. And that can be a real encouragement to those of you that perhaps have been grieved at the injustices that you've encountered.

So that's briefly God, our creator, our sustainer, our redeemer, and our judge. So what's the appropriate response then? We've considered for a little bit who God is and what He has done.

What's the appropriate response?

Well, now I want to go back through some of those and consider that. We're told in verse 1 to sing to the Lord. Now that we have a picture of who our God is, we've been reminded of something of that. Who He is and what He has done.

Then it should make a lot of sense now to say, sing unto the Lord. Sing to the Lord. We do sing together when we sing in worship, but the focus should be to the Lord.

[37 : 03] And that's sometimes a tricky balance. Because we are singing alongside our brothers and sisters and God has spread His gifts around in different ways and sometimes that can get kind of complicated in the flesh.

The bottom line is we are gathered together as God's people to sing unto the Lord. And we need to remember that. And I think we all need to remember what that means. Let me ask you a question here.

And some of you are going to respond differently depending on kind of where you fall along the continuum here. But what would happen if you came into the house of worship and you were singing for men?

Instead of singing unto the Lord, you were singing to men or for the sake of men around you. Well, I think gifted singers might be tempted to sing out for the praise of men.

But if they're singing to the Lord, it doesn't mean they're necessarily going to be quieter, but they're going to be using their gifts to magnify His name and not really caring what people around them will think.

[38:07] On the other hand, if you're singing for men and you're an average singer or not that great of a singer, you might be tempted to sing softly or perhaps not at all because you don't want people around you to really hear you.

But if you sing to the Lord, then you will lift up whatever it is that God gave you and bring it back to Him and worship in that oration. The word sing has a base meaning of creaking with a harsh or grating sound.

That was the base meaning of this word. Now, eventually it came to mean sing aloud for joy. But I think the base meaning of this word might be instructive to us here.

Because the emphasis of singing to the Lord here is not really the perfection of the skill. It's responding to Jehovah with joy.

So I want to encourage you wherever you happen to fall along the line of gifts, it's really not about that when you come in to sing unto the Lord. It's about who He is. So take what you have, whatever that instrument is that you have, and bring it before Him and lay it before Him and with exaltation and joy make His name great.

[39:27] And there are various applications depending on where you happen to fall in that particular gifting. The language of verse 1, O come, let us sing to the Lord, puts this in the context of worship leaders and worshipers calling one another to worship.

So it certainly is in the context of the people of God. But we do it to the Lord and for the Lord, but with each other. And that's a... I love that.

We have a lot of ways that sin can corrupt the process and we struggle in various ways. But I love that. Think about it. We come into the house of the Lord together, lifting up our voices, sometimes literally in harmony.

And we open our mouths to sing joyfully unto the Lord, but we're doing it with family members, spiritually speaking, if certainly I know physically sometimes to literal relatives, but spiritually speaking, we're doing this with family members, brothers and sisters in Christ.

And I love that. Because to me, it's such a symbol of God's work in our lives. When you think about the fact that He has humbled us in various ways, made us His children, brought us together, we're harmonizing and singing together unto the Lord.

[40:49] He receives the glory. We're singing to Him. But we have the privilege of not having to be alone to do it. But we have a family, a family to sing with, to worship our great God together.

We're told to shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. Shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation.

And also in verse 2, to sing, shout joyfully with psalms, we're told as well.

I think there's maybe a balance here in these two ideas. Shout joyfully to the rock and shout joyfully with psalms. You know, we all as God's people ought to be cultivating a holy enthusiasm because we know and love this God, our deliverer and our safety.

Now, as a guest speaker, it's not really my purpose this morning to come in and go into all kinds of detail on exactly, you know, what your worship ought to look like or anything like that.

But I think I can say from the scriptures here this morning that we're going to we ought to have both a joy and a reverence when we come into the house of God to praise him.

[42:00] And certainly music is a part of worship. Barnes said that in public worship, this shouting joyfully would denote praise of the most animated kind. Now, if Barnes were here in our day, I'm not sure he would have put it quite like that because of our culture.

But think about it. Sometimes we can, I know, be unbalanced. I mean, I know I can be. And even as I was doing some reading, thinking about this sermon, Spurgeon kind of made a comment similar to the idea that that some of us work so hard at creating an austere or a severe or some kind of a holy atmosphere that we forget to come with thanksgiving and to come with joy.

And that this ought to be a wonderful, beautiful, joyous occasion to come before God. But I think in this passage, we really have this combination of joy and reverence.

I certainly don't believe that this passage teaches that anything goes or that we are free to draw attention to ourselves. But on the other hand, an appropriate and enthusiastic response to God and

worship ought to be the norm.

Now, shouting joyfully with Psalms kind of gives you the idea of reverence and order and theology guiding that process. But that ought to be united with enthusiasm.

[43:23] I want you to listen to something else Spurgeon said. He said, it's not always easy to unite enthusiasm with reverence. And it is a frequent fault to destroy one of these qualities while straining after the other.

The perfection of singing is that which unites joy with gravity, exaltation, and exaltation with humility, fervency with sobriety. So I would say the same thing for you as for me and ask that the Lord would help us strive for balanced worship in this area.

Enthusiasm, joy, exaltation, and fervency with reverence and awe. One of the reasons that I began by painting something of a picture of God before we looked at what it is we're supposed to do is we're supposed to do.

Because I think really that's the best way to look at this. In other words, sometimes I think it can be tempting to try to stir something up or whip something up that has more to do with whipping something up than it does the focus of our attention.

I think if our hearts are being instructed by the scriptures, then we will take a good, long, accurate look at who God is and then the reminder of who he is and what he has done will draw us to joyous worship.

[44:47] Now I know there are times when we have to stir ourselves up. And I think sometimes the scriptures and even music can help do that.

But but oh, that our joy would come from taking a look at God. And when we see him and think of what he has done in our lives and of his tender, loving, shepherding care, how could we not come before his presence with singing?

Well, that's the next thing we're told to do. Come before his presence with singing. When we come into worship, worship really is done in the present.

You know, like right now, right here today with a recognition of the past. And hope for the future. Isn't that true? We think of all that he has done in the past.

We can even go all the way back to the Red Sea and and to creation and to Sinai and think of all of his faithfulness and his promises, his character that has stayed true doesn't change as we're here worshipping right now this morning.

[45:54] We bank on that. But we also have tremendous hope when we think about the reliability of his word and his promises for the future. Our hope is in what the Bible says about who God is and what he has done.

And it's also in the faithfulness shown to us by God along the way. And some of you can say this morning with me, great is his faithfulness. Now, when you think about it, one definition of thanksgiving could be worshipping God's faithfulness.

Because when you give thanks, you're saying God has shown himself to be faithful. And you're really worshipping his faithfulness when you give thanks.

We're also told to worship and bow down and kneel before the Lord. And I don't know that we necessarily need to make a big deal about the physical posture, like somehow we have to literally kneel or we're doing something wrong.

But, you know, I do think that that it can be reflective of what's inside of our hearts. We have reverence here once again emphasized along with joy to worship and bow down.

[47:09] We're exuberant in worship because of our great God, but we're humbled in worship because we know that we're nothing except what he has made us. You know, it's possible to kneel without reverence.

And it's also possible to revere without kneeling. But what's important is that you are reflecting an appropriate view of God in your heart and in your worship.

So really, I think the important thing is the reality of the humility in the heart that is shown in the outward posture. But I wouldn't dismiss it too quickly either, though. Now, I'm not necessarily saying that certain forms of physical posture are something I would encourage in public worship.

That's up to Pastor John, Pastor Aaron, Pastor Bob to work through. But there are times I know that if I have actually knelt in prayer, it can help my heart.

It can help my heart because I am physically putting myself in the posture of submission. And sometimes that can actually help me to remember who I am before God.

[48:16] So sometimes, even if it's personally, I think that kneeling before the Lord can be helpful, especially if it really does reflect what's going on inside of your heart. Let's just be careful that we don't turn it into some kind of a pharisaical thing where all of a sudden, you know, our praying is a little more holy because we knelt while we prayed.

But if it's a reflection of our heart or if it helps us to revere God, the most important thing is the reality of the heart. But the psalmist is encouraging us.

This would have been something understood and common to them. Let us kneel before the Lord, our maker. Let us worship and bow down. Now, I want to just briefly bring you to this warning. That's something of the call to worship that is given. And I want to encourage you with those things. But we are also given this warning against rebellion. So briefly, just hear this.

In a positive way, we're told to hear his voice. In verse 7 at the end, we should hear his voice. And I think what it means to hear his voice would be to repent, to obey, to believe.

[49:27] If we really have ears to hear, that's what's going to be happening. But on the negative side, we're told not to harden our hearts. In Exodus chapter 17, the people were close to stoning Moses because they had nothing to drink.

They were not content. They were not obedient. They were not trusting. And in verse 7, it says, so he called the name of the place Masa, testing, and Meribah, quarreling, because of the contention of the children of Israel.

And because they tempted the Lord, saying, is the Lord among us or not? The picture we have here in the second part of this psalm is a picture of unbelief.

They tested the Lord because the Lord constantly was coming to them in faithfulness and provision, and they were constantly doubting him. Yeah, you took us through, you took us out of Egypt, but I'm not sure you're going to help us now.

Yeah, you took us through the Red Sea, but not sure you can really help us now. Yeah, you brought quail and manna, but what about now? So many of them manifested a heart of unbelief.

[50:45] And that's really, I think, what this warning is about. There's a warning to the children of Israel, but the author of Hebrews brings this into the local New Testament church as well. Do not harden your hearts.

I think here in this text, we may very well have that actual, in fact, I think the version that Pastor Aaron read may have even used those terms, Masa and Meribah, because that's what it means in verse 8.

The New King James says, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, as in the day of trial in the wilderness. But really what's going on here, what's being said, and some of your versions might reflect is this is really a reference to what I just read to you from the book of Exodus.

The time when they were testing God, putting him to the test. What a sinful thing to do, to put God to the test. But that's what they did so often. And then they quarreled with one another.

Oh, may the Lord keep us from this kind of heart where we put him to the test, maybe by our quarreling. But we doubt him. And again, we begin to live as if God were not really God, as if he didn't really exist in the way that he has told us.

[51:57] I know Israel was guilty of that. That's what's being said here. But I wonder how many times we've been guilty of that ourselves. Do not harden your hearts with ingratitude, with rebellion, with unbelief.

Like they did in the wilderness. Concerning this idea of tempting God, Spurgeon said this, and this is where I want to ask you, does this ever describe you and me?

Not to acquiesce in the will of God or not to submit to his will and accept it, is virtually to tempt him to alter his plans to suit our imperfect views of how the universe should be governed.

Let me read that again. Not to acquiesce in the will of God is virtually to tempt him to alter his plans to suit our imperfect views of how the universe should be governed.

Lord, you're not doing a good enough job. Not sure you really know what you're doing there, Lord. Let me help you out a little bit.

[53:05] Doesn't that sound awful, just to even hear that verbalized? But really in our hearts, when we don't believe, that's what we're really saying. When we don't believe God, we're basically saying, you don't really know what you're doing.

You don't really have it under control. You're not really who you said you are and you can't really do what you've said you can do. Well, we're given this sobering assessment where God says

concerning Israel, they tried me though they saw my work.

You know, that's got to be one of the saddest clauses in all of Scripture. May this never mark Grace Fellowship Church or Kemp Road Baptist Church, that even though they saw my work, they put me to the test.

Over and over, God proves himself faithful and true, but Israel continued to put him to the test.

What kind of a relationship would that be?

If you had a long time friendship or even a long time marriage, what would it be like if after 20, 30 years of faithfulness, you felt like you still had to prove your basic foundational love to the person that you're married to or had a friendship with?

[54 : 21] How long would a friendship last if every time you met with your friend, it's like, you've got to prove to me that, you know, you're going to be faithful, you're going to be true, that you're going to do what you said you would do. After a while, wouldn't that just wear you out?

Well, can you imagine being the creator of all things and a gracious redeemer and having a people just putting him to the test, putting him to the test?

He provides, he shelters, he saves, he shields, he takes them out of Egypt, delivers them from the Red Sea, brings them food and water. They just keep putting him to the test, putting him to the test. And he says, 40 years. You know the story. That's why so many of them didn't make it. Above a certain age, it was pretty much Joshua and Caleb that made it to the promised land.

God's faithfulness is perfect and his mercies never fail. How can we see his work and continue to try him, continue to not believe him, continue to put him to the test?

[55 : 28] So the sobering conclusion to this psalm is that they shall not enter my rest, God says. Now certainly there was an application there for the nation of Israel and those people I just referred to, a reference to Canaan land.

But you know the author of Hebrews takes this text and applies it to us as well. We are warned about having an unbelieving heart and falling away from the living God.

Exhort one another, lest you are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, we're told. So this is a warning really to all professing Christians.

Make sure by God's grace that you have a heart of love and obedience and belief. Ask the Lord to help you see that in its truth.

You know, we certainly we don't have hearts of perfection, but can we look at our hearts and say, Lord, I want to see your work in my own heart? Can I see repentance? Can I see humility?

[56 : 32] Can I see faith? Which is your work as well. Not just faith in Christ for salvation, but faith to live by day by day, whereby I practically place myself into your care and trust you to be who you said and trust you to do what I know you can do and what I've seen you do in the past.

So to those of us who profess Christ, I would say, since this is applied to us, let's squarely face it and say, Lord, help me to make sure that I'm not self-deceived, but that I am found in Christ, that my life is giving evidence.

And then help. Let me, Lord, help my brothers and sisters to make it as well. You know, that's the context of Hebrews. I think it's Hebrews three. The context is within the family of God.

We should exhort one another daily so that this kind of rebellion is not true of those of us who profess faith in Christ. So I want to encourage you who know Christ to encourage and exhort your brothers and sisters as well, especially if you feel like you begin to see them fall into hard, stony, cold unbelief.

And maybe it begins to be prolonged. Don't let them fall without doing something. Don't let them go on in their unbelief without a heart of concern.

[58 : 01] Be a brother. Be a sister and show concern for their souls. I want to finish with a word to those of you who don't know Christ. I think Brother Spurgeon put it well when he said there can be no rest to an unbelieving heart.

Just like what was symbolized in Canaan. Just like we have coming for those who know Christ at eternal rest. Those who know Christ are going to see that and experience that and have the eternal Sabbath.

Those who don't know Christ will never have rest. You don't have it now. And you won't have it then unless you become one of the Lord's sheep.

Or you manifest yourself to be one of his sheep through repentance and faith. What a horrible thing to be described as someone such as we see in this passage who goes astray in his heart and does

not know God's ways.

God's justice demands eternal punishment and judgment for those who do not enter his rest. So I want to leave you with this thought.

[59:09] If you don't know Christ this morning, you know this invitation to worship is actually an invitation to you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Because isn't really, isn't that what happens when someone comes to faith in Christ?

They go from being a self-worshipper or a worshipper of some other God to becoming a worshipper of Jesus Christ. Christ. So really, I believe that in the Psalms when we have these invitations to worship God, and sometimes they're directed to the nations, to Gentiles.

That invitation to worship God is an invitation for you, unbeliever, to come to faith in Jesus Christ and become a worshipper of the one true God that I proclaimed this morning.

You are invited to worship. The only thing is you have to come through the Lord Jesus Christ in order to do so. May the Lord grant you the grace to see the Lord Jesus in all of his beauty, to see our great God as the one true God who is everything this Psalm declares him to be.

And may he cause you, unbeliever, to bow down and worship. And that begins with faith and repentance worked in by the Holy Spirit, but you are responsible to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

[60:21] And may those things be true of you today. Let's pray. Our Father God, we thank you so much for your word and for this passage that reminds us of your great love for us.

Lord, we thank you so much for your Help us, Lord, to worship you as we ought, with knowledge and with truth and with great joy and exuberance.

Help us also, Lord, to take heed from this warning. Help us, Lord, those who profess your name to be careful and vigilant so that we would remain faithful and our brothers and sisters would as well. Help us, Lord, to have a love and a concern for them as well as for our own souls. And Father, for those who are without Christ this morning, draw them.

Help them to see the wonder and the beauty and the privilege that it is to worship in the family of God. To worship the one and only you, the one and only God of the entire universe and beyond.

[61:48] Lord, bring the unbelieving to faith and repentance, coming to the Lord Jesus Christ so that they could be numbered amongst the true worshipers of God.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.