

Psalm 100

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[0 : 00] One very helpful resource that we have on the Bon Accord website is the Sermons Archive.

And if you ever want to have a look, you'll discover that there you have access to 30 years of preaching here in the congregation in Bon Accord.

And something that I sometimes do, not always, but something I sometimes do when I'm fixing my mind on a particular text or passage to preach on is to just have a wee look to see how often perhaps that passage has been preached on in that period of time that I've mentioned and who has preached on it, hopefully not myself, but who others might have preached from that same passage.

And doing that, you can discover sometimes some surprising results. And curiously, it's sometimes the case, not always, but it's sometimes the case that what you might imagine are the more familiar texts are the ones that have been least preached on.

And trying to work out why that might be so, I wonder whether it might be that sometimes preachers imagine, well, I don't really have much to say that hasn't already been said on this particular passage or maybe a sense that folks are so familiar with the verse or the passage that for some reason, perhaps we shy away from such passages.

[1 : 32] I'm just speculating, but it's curious. And this evening is a case in point. We're going to spend some time this evening looking at Psalm 100. And I think it's got to be the case that Psalm 100, perhaps together with Psalm 23, are the two most familiar Psalms, certainly in our Scottish church tradition.

Well, checking on the sermons archive there on the website for the occasions where a sermon had been preached on Psalm 100.

I discovered in the last 30 years here in Bonacord on just one occasion, going back over 20 years, and it was the late Professor Clement Graham. In fairness, at a family service, I did speak about this Psalm not that long ago, but in terms of a, I shouldn't call it a proper sermon, but a normal sermon, it's just that one occasion two decades ago.

And of anecdotal interest, not particularly helpful for our sermon this evening, but of anecdotal interest, the same is the case for Psalm 23, just on one occasion in the last 30 years, and that was Professor John L. Mackay about 20 years ago.

Now, Professor Mackay is going to be with us next week, so I certainly hope he doesn't preach on Psalm 23, but I'm sure that won't be the case. And if he does, I'm sure it will be very edifying for you. It does make me wonder whether there might be some merit in following, or at least in a measure, adopting the Anglican tradition of a church calendar or a lectionary, which there are pros and cons, but one thing that it does secure is that the Bible in its entirety is covered over a period of time, but that's another story.

[3 : 21] Back to this evening, Psalm 100. Worship lies at the heart of who we are and why we are here, why we exist, why we breathe.

And this psalm that we have read and that we so often sing is a rich resource to guide and instruct us in this pivotal matter of worship.

Indeed, not only to guide and instruct us, but to challenge and enthuse us in this matter of worshipping a God. The psalm answers a lot of important questions that need to be posed with regard to worship.

Why, where, how, what, who, all of these questions are dealt with, are answered, certainly in a measure, in these few brief verses that constitute the psalm.

And these are the kind of questions, or these are the questions that we are going to pose and answer this evening with the help of this psalm. And what I want to do as we answer these questions is very particularly highlight how the psalm, this psalm, this psalm 100, is best understood, certainly best appreciated in the light of the person of Jesus and His coming and His work on our behalf.

[4 : 55] The psalm, though it wouldn't ordinarily be categorized technically, I suppose, as a messianic psalm, nonetheless is a psalm that very much points to Jesus.

And certainly the answers to the questions that we pose are best answered in the light of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done. I hope in a measure that will become clear as we consider the psalm.

Some of you may have known or may know, though he's across in the States now, Dr. David Murray. He used to be a minister of our denomination. He's now a professor of Old Testament and practical theology at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary.

Now, David has just written a book. We were at college together at the Free Church College, and it's from that time that I know David. He's just written a book this year, it's just come out this year, entitled, Jesus on Every Page.

It's quite a catchy title, a very descriptive title, and the purpose of the book is to help the reader find Jesus particularly in the Old Testament.

[6 : 02] And I think the title very helpfully gets across the big message that he's trying to get across, Jesus on Every Page. And Jesus is indeed on every page, and certainly in this psalm we will discover Jesus, I would suggest, not only on every page but in every verse.

Let's just flesh out the questions that we threw out a moment ago and then tackle them one by one. What we want to ask first of all is, why are we to worship God?

I began by simply stating that that is the very heart of who we are and why we are here, but that's a premise, that's a statement. It needs to be substantiated. And so, the first question I hope will, in some measure, answer that.

Why are we to worship God? Then, where are we to worship God? That might seem a slightly more curious question, but I think we can helpfully consider it. How are we to worship God?

The manner of our worship. What is our worship to God? What constitutes worship to God? And then finally, the question, who are to worship God?

[7 : 12] I think all of these questions are important questions, and I think all of them are answered in this psalm. So, let's begin with the first one. Why are we to worship God?

I think there is a two-fold answer, where both elements of that two-fold answer go hand in hand. And the two elements of the answer to the question, why are we to worship God, why are we to worship God, are because of who God is, or because of what God is like, really the same idea, who God is, what He is like.

And then the second element of the answer, because of what God has done. Indeed, we can put that in the present, what God does. And of course, these two elements are intimately connected, because God's actions, what He does, perfectly reflect His character, who He is.

So, we can look at them separately, but they are so intimately connected. And this psalm answers that question along these lines. Why are we to worship God?

Because of who God is, and because of what God has done. We begin by looking at what the psalm says concerning who God is. And we turn to the final verse of the psalm.

[8 : 29] And we start at the end of the psalm, in considering who God is, or what He's like. And the reason we find the answer at the end of the psalm is because in the psalm, the psalm, or the psalmist as he writes the psalm, is building up to this crescendo, where God's character is described as He closes His psalm.

And what does the psalmist say concerning God that explains all that has gone before? Well, what does he say? We just need to read the verse. For the Lord is good, and His love endures forever.

His faithfulness continues through all generations. The psalmist describes God as good. And this goodness of God finds expression, if you wish, in His love, in His steadfast love.

This Hebrew word that speaks of God's covenant love. This word chesed. This love, this special love that God has. This faithful, steadfast love that God has for His people.

And His faithfulness, or His truth, His reliability that He is a God who is certain, faithful, truthful. It's interesting, really just as something of curiosity.

[9 : 46] The Hebrew word there that is translated faithfulness is the word aman, from where we get the word amen. The word amen is derived directly from that Hebrew word.

And when we say amen at the end of the psalm, the idea is that we are declaring that we are praying to the God who is certain. And we are declaring our confidence that He hears and answers us. Amen.

He is faithful. And that's really, as I say, just of anecdotal or curiosity interest. But here at the end of the psalm, the psalmist speaks of who God is as the foundation, really, for the call to worship that has gone before.

Indeed, it begins with that word, for the Lord is good. Why worship God? Why call all the earth to praise this God? Well, for this reason, because of who He is, because of what He is like.

He is good. His love endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations. And where do we discover, where do we witness, where do we appreciate the goodness of God, the steadfast love of God, the faithfulness or truthfulness of God in its most powerful and and vivid and eloquent expression?

[11 : 05] And in the person of Jesus. It is in Jesus that we see God as the one who is good, whose love endures forever, whose faithfulness continues through all generations.

And in Jesus we see most clearly that God is indeed as the psalmist describes Him. Indeed, it's interesting how in John's Gospel and chapter 1, where we read of the coming of Jesus and where we have Jesus described to us, there is an echo of this Old Testament language that speaks of the Lord, of Yahweh.

In John chapter 1 and in verse 14, a very familiar verse in John's Gospel, And these words, full of grace and truth, are Greek words that echo these Hebrew words that speak of the Lord as loving, whose love endures forever, and whose faithfulness continues through all generations.

And what is said of Jesus is that He is full of these characteristics. He is full of grace and truth. It is in Jesus that we are best able to appreciate God for who He is.

And so when we sing this psalm, when we sing this psalm as disciples of Jesus Christ, as believers, as those who have put their trust in Jesus, we sing it with a greater understanding and with a greater depth in the light of who Jesus is and what He has done for us.

[12 : 51] So we answer the question, why are we to worship God because of who God is, but also because of what God has done and indeed what He continues to do.

Particularly in verse 3, the psalmist explores some of what God has done. What does He say concerning what God has done?

Well, He states something very fundamental. He states that God has created us. But not only has God created us, but God cares for us. Indeed, He goes further.

He has adopted us as His own. We are His. It is He who made us and we are His. We are His people. That is the special relationship that He has established with us.

He creates us. He cares for us. He sustains us, but He also adopts us into His family. We are His own. And He has saved us. He's rescued us. That is something that doesn't maybe immediately come across in the language of verse 3 when we see God's people described as the sheep of His pasture.

[14 : 03] When we think of this image of God's people as God's flock, as sheep, we maybe don't immediately think of the truth or the reality of God's salvation.

But I think the language is intended to portray this truth that God is a God who rescues and who saves. It is interesting that this section of the Psalter, Book 4 from Psalm 90 through to Psalm 106, is sometimes called the Exodus collection.

Because throughout this section of the Psalter there are repeated references to the Exodus. And the theme of the Exodus is very prominent. And indeed you find in other Psalms this reality of how the Exodus is described in terms of God bringing out a flock from captivity to liberty.

Just to give one example that in this case is outwith this particular section of the Psalter. In Psalm 78 and in verse 52. Listen to the language here that speaks of God's people as His flock.

But notice in what context. It says, He brought His people out like a flock. He led them like sheep through the desert. He guided them safely so they were unafraid.

[15 : 21] But the sea engulfed their enemies. And so on. And so there very explicitly in that Psalm, the theme of God as a God who liberates, who rescues, who redeems His people, is presented in this language of a flock of sheep who are saved by God, rescued by God, and led by God.

And so here in Psalm 100 where we meet this same language of God's people as the sheep of His pasture, as His flock. I think it's legitimate to see in that language a reference to God as a God who saves.

Now we have references to God as a saving God in other parts of the Psalm. But even in this part of the Psalm that maybe wouldn't immediately lead us to that conclusion. What are we doing?

We're thinking about what God has done. Why do we worship God? Because of who He is, but also because of what God has done. He's created us. He cares for us. He's made us His own. He's saved us.

He's rescued us. And so for all of these reasons we have good reason. We have cogent, coherent, weighty reasons to worship Him.

[16 : 28] We worship God because of who He is and what He has done. And as we've already suggested, more than suggested, in Jesus we are best able to appreciate who God is.

We are best able to see and to understand God's character, who He is and what He's like. And we can do so very especially in discovering and experiencing what Jesus has done for us as our Savior, who has rescued us from slavery to sin and to self.

So that's the first question that I think is answered by this Psalm. Why are we to worship God? But a second question that arises is where are we to worship God?

Now I already suggested that this was maybe seemingly a strange question or might appear to be a strange question. But the Psalm does point to a place of worship in answer to the question where.

And notice there in verse 4, enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. The language there is of a place, a physical place with gates and courts.

[17 : 43] And of course this is temple language, the place where God chose to dwell in the Old Testament. Not that God of course was ever restricted to a given place, for God is omnipresent, He is everywhere.

But He chose, He chose to make the temple His special dwelling place. The place where He in a special way made Himself known to His people.

And of course when we appreciate that, what we can take from that is the big truth in answer to the question where are we to worship God, is that we are to worship God in His presence.

Now that's perhaps easy enough to state, but that does if we think about it even very fleetingly, it generates a problem for us.

It generates a problem for sinners, and we are sinners. Why is that a problem that we have to worship God in His courts, in His presence? Well, the Psalter tells us why it's a problem, why it's a big problem.

[18 : 51] Let's just read what the Psalmist says in Psalm 24 and verses 3 and 4. Well, who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place?

Who can enter into His presence to worship Him? Well, who are these people? Well, what does the Psalmist respond? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.

Such can enter into His presence to worship Him. Those who have a pure heart. And so I say this evening, hands up, everybody here who has a pure heart.

How many of us can say, my heart is pure? You say, that's the problem. Where are we to worship God? We are to worship God in His presence. But we can't come into His presence such as we are.

Because we don't have clean hands or pure hearts. Well, what can we do? Well, cue Jesus. What we can do is that we can walk with the one who is pure.

[19 : 55] The one who is altogether and perfectly pure. We can be clothed with the righteousness of Jesus. And as we are clothed with His righteousness, so we are able to enter into the presence of God.

Yes, we are to worship God in His presence, in His courts if you wish. But we can only enter His presence gripped by Jesus. We can only enter His presence clothed in the righteousness of Jesus.

Jesus is the one who has opened up the way into the Father's presence. Hence, at His death, as we know, as Jesus died, the temple that guarded the Holy of Holies in the temple was rent in two.

Speaking of, very dramatically, of how that way had been opened up for sinners into the very presence of God by what Jesus had done in dying on the cross.

He is the one who has opened up the way, but He is also the one who accompanies us into the presence of God. And so, when we pray, when we would presume to speak to God, we do so in the name of Jesus.

[21 : 10] Because we know that it is only in His name, only resting on His merits, that we can approach Him to worship Him. Where are we to worship God? In His presence. We are to enter His gates. We are to enter into His courts.

And we can only do that as we are trusting in Jesus. But the Psalm also answers the question, how are we to worship God?

Here we are thinking about the manner of our worship. And the Psalm is full of references to the manner of our worship.

And we can just notice one or two. We can certainly say this, that we are to worship God in humility and dependence. The verses that we have, or the verbs that we find in the Psalm, shout, worship, know, enter, give thanks.

All of these are commands, where we are being commanded to do all of these things. And of course, it's altogether proper that we should be commanded. It's altogether right that we should be those who recognize that we stand under orders.

[22 : 18] And that God has every right, has the prerogative to command us to do these things. It's not a burdensome duty for us, but nonetheless, we humbly recognize that God can and does command us.

We are to come in humility in that regard, but also independence, knowing that we stand in need of God. We are the ones who need Him, rather than He being the one who stands in need of us.

We come in humility and dependence. We come with joy. Joy is maybe the most dominant theme in this Psalm. Shout for joy to the Lord. Come before Him with joyful songs.

Worship the Lord with gladness, and so on and so forth. There's so much, even in such a short Psalm, that speaks of how we are to worship God in this manner with joy. Maybe if we just focus our attention for a moment on one of the words, or one of the expressions that we find in the Psalm, there at the end of verse 3 that is particularly interesting.

Sorry, at the end of verse 2. Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before Him with joyful songs. Now, the original word that is translated in this version as joyful songs is a Hebrew word that carries the idea of jubilation, of ringing cries.

[23 : 36] And to picture the occasion where such a shout or cry would be appropriate. It's the kind of thing you would expect when people who have been under brutal oppression are liberated and experiencing the thrill of newfound freedom.

And they cry out in celebration and jubilation, in celebration at their liberty, at the rescue that they have been the objects of. This is the language that the Psalmist is using.

This is the kind of joy that should characterize our worship as those who have been redeemed, as those who have been rescued. We are to worship with joy. We are to worship with thanksgiving.

Enter His gates with thanksgiving. Conscious of and grateful for all that God has done and continues to do for us. And as we think of these matters, of how we are to worship God, we can also helpfully bring Jesus into the picture.

You see, we are going to be able to worship in this way more fully and more deeply in the light of all that Jesus is and all that Jesus has done for us.

[24 : 49] In the light of His saving work on our behalf, as we consider what He has done for us. And that humbles us to think that we have been the objects of such amazing love.

As we consider the salvation that we enjoy, that fills us with joy and thanksgiving. His love and His continuing care provokes in us thankfulness and thanksgiving.

And so, in the light of Jesus, we are able to worship in the manner that we ought more deeply and more fully. Two more questions that we want to answer and respond to.

The penultimate question is, what is our worship to God? And here, the idea is, or the question that we're posing really is, what constitutes worship? Okay, it's something we've got to do.

We've thought about the manner in which we are to do it. But what is it? Now, you might respond, and rightly, well, that's what we're doing right now. As we've gathered as a group of believers to worship God.

[25 : 54] This is a worship service. We sing. We read the Bible. We pray. We're worshiping God even now, right now. And of course, that is true. That is the manner in which, or that is what we do.

That is what worship is. But of course, it's that and much, much more. And where the psalm perhaps helps us to understand or to appreciate that it is more than this, though it includes this, is in one word in particular that the psalmist uses in verse 2.

In verse 2, it begins, worship the Lord with gladness. Now, those of you who, in your minds, are more familiar with the older version of the Bible, and indeed the metrical version of the psalm, will remember that there the word that is used is serve.

Serve the Lord. And in many ways, to use the word, the English word serve, to translate the Hebrew word here, is more helpful.

It is correctly translated worship, but it is more helpfully translated serve. Because the word serve is broader, certainly as we listen to it and as we understand it, and it's helpfully broader.

[27 : 10] The Hebrew word that the psalmist uses here, translated in our version, worship, but can also be translated serve, is a word that is used in very different contexts or in a broad range of circumstances.

In the Old Testament, it speaks of the service that a servant or a slave would render to his master. It speaks of the service that a subject would render to his king. It speaks of the service that men and women of God can render to God.

In all of these ways, this word is used to serve. And to understand that, I say it's helpful because I think it does relay and capture the truth that for the believer, everything we do constitutes service to God or worship of God.

If we just remember for a moment what we were thinking about last week in Colossians chapter 3, whatever you do, thinking there in the context of work, whatever you do, do it with all your heart as for the Lord.

And there we were remembering how this really is an application of a truth that Paul was touching on just a few verses before, where he commends the believers or exhorts the believers that in whatever they do, they are to do it to the glory of God.

[28 : 32] And this is the idea that I think is captured by the word that the psalmist uses, serve the Lord with gladness. Worship the Lord with gladness. What is our worship to God?

It is everything that we do as we would seek to do it for his service in his sight and for his glory. And this truth, this reality, also is echoed or points us forward to the manner in which Christian service is described by Paul in Romans chapter 12 and verse 1.

Again, a familiar verse where the service rendered by Jesus really serves as our template. Therefore, says Paul, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.

This is your spiritual act of worship. Your bodies, your lives, everything you are, offer it to God as your spiritual act of worship.

But let's finish by just thinking about the final question that I suggested is answered by the psalm. And that is, who are to worship God? I think in the psalm we can identify, for want of a better word, two congregations.

[29 : 45] There is very explicit reference to a flock. And the flock very clearly is a reference to God's people, to God's covenant people, those whom God has called to himself.

But there is also a call to the earth. And the call to the earth extends beyond the flock that is also made reference to in the psalm.

If we think, first of all, of the flock who are to worship God. And the flock that verse 3 speaks of are very clearly God's people.

Those who know God, those who are trusting in God, those who have been called by God to himself. They are his flock. We are his flock. Jesus is the good shepherd and we are his flock.

And we as God's people, as believers, as Christians, so very obviously we might say, are those who are to worship God. That is laid upon us so clearly an overwhelming onus to worship God.

[30 : 50] We could call it a delightful duty to worship our Lord. We, as God's people, are called to worship God. I don't think that could be particularly controversial.

It could be no other way. But what is interesting about the psalm is how the psalm extends beyond the flock. Because the call to worship is not only extended to us.

The call is directed, in the first instance, to all the earth. That is how the psalm begins. Shout for joy to the Lord, to Yahweh, to the God of Israel.

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. And it's interesting that the language that the psalmist uses here when he speaks of all the earth is not the language that we do find on different occasions in the Psalter.

The language of all nations or all peoples. Where there is a reference really to the diversity of nations and peoples. And all of the peoples and all of the nations and all of the kings of all of the nations are called to worship God.

[31 : 53] Here the language is different. It's a call to the whole earth as, we might say, a single entity. God, in this call, claims the whole earth for himself.

The whole earth. Not just representatives from the many different nations as we would sometimes maybe apply the language of all the nations and all the peoples. But no, here the call is to the whole earth.

That the whole earth would shout for joy to the Lord. Now, the practical implication of this for us as those who are in the flock, those who are Christians, is that we are the ones called to extend that invitation or that command to all the earth.

That is, in this opening line of the psalm, a missionary imperative that we would extend that call to the whole earth.

For God is worthy of the worship and the recognition and the praise of all the earth. And, of course, this missionary imperative also points forward to Jesus and to his saving work for the life of the world.

[33 : 07] As we were thinking about just a couple of Sundays ago, or maybe last Sunday, in John chapter 6. Jesus came and gave his life for the life of the world.

We commented on the universal implication of what Jesus was saying. And, of course, that language echoes the language of the psalmist. Shout for joy to the Lord all the earth.

So, who are to worship God? In a word, everybody. We, as God's people, so very particularly. But also, the call, the command extended to the whole earth.

So, the psalm is a psalm that helps us, I hope and I trust has helped us this evening, to consider this big theme of worship. That is why we exist.

That is at the heart of who we are. We are those called to worship God. And I trust that as we consider what the psalm says, as we sing the psalm, not only this evening, but as we will, I have no doubt, on many occasions, that as we do so, we would particularly cast our eyes to Jesus.

[34 : 22] And to the way in which knowing Jesus and understanding who Jesus is and what Jesus has done, allows us to sing the psalm with so much more depth and feeling and understanding.

And, I trust, with the joy and jubilation that the very psalm commends to us. Well, let us pray. Heavenly Father, we come to you. We thank you that we are indeed under orders.

And what a pleasant order it is that you would command us to praise your great and holy name. That you would invite us and command us to enter into your courts with praise and with thanksgiving.

We thank you that the way has indeed been opened up, that the doors have been swung wide open in and through the person and work of your Son, Jesus Christ. And so, we would grip tight on him.

Indeed, knowing and being grateful that he is the one who grips tightly hold of us. And with him, we would enter into your presence, even as we do this evening, to worship you. And we pray that as we leave this place, it would be our desire and our intention that we would continue to worship you in everything that we do.

[35 : 39] And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, let's close our service by singing Psalm 100. We'll sing in the Scottish Psalter.

And we'll sing the first version of the Psalm. You'll find that on page 362. All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.

Him serve with mirth. His praise foretell. Come ye before him and rejoice. We'll sing to the tune of the Old 100th. We'll stand to sing. We'll stand to sing. One, first, of making of them.

Jumions of the and Warrior Showcasefelict. Before we pass ■ your son as a■■■■■■■ that we receive must I can ■■ on fire. But, then, when I■i revival haste oscarly hoe. Is your son as a reason why. Help! look in my mind here. Let me breathe if I can recite with them first, I can recite with poets■■■ Nobel inwestrasilachulachulach.

As a blessing that northwesternach Ilzev garlands his praiseá'n Lord with cheerful voice, in servant earth his praise portail.

[36 : 48] Come ye before him and rejoice. Know that the Lord is God indeed.

With our courage he gave us faith. We are his home, he does us need.

And for his sheep, he does us need. O enter then his gates with praise.

Ambrose with joy his courts unto. Praise God and bless his dear always.

For it is simply so to do. For why the Lord our God is good.

[38 : 28] His mercy is forever sure. His truth at all times firmly stood.

And shall from age to age change you. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and always.

Amen.