

Family Service

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[0 : 0 0] A very easy question to start off with. I don't know if I'll have other questions or not, but the first one's very easy. What was the psalm that we sang, not just now, but just a moment ago, that you came up to sing? Yeah, what psalm was it? Psalm 100. Well done. And I'm going to talk to you a little bit about that psalm. But to introduce what I want to say, how many of you here have seen on TV opera singers? Does anybody know what an opera singer is? Yeah, what's an opera singer, Yoshi? A high note singer. Very good. That's a very technical definition. I don't know if I could have done better myself. I was wondering how to define it. It's these, usually they're big men and they sing very loud and I guess very high notes. They can reach very high notes and very low notes as well, I think. I'm not very sure. I'm getting into deep water here. But opera singers, now I wonder, does anybody think it would be a good idea for me maybe to sing an opera up front here? Yoshi's going, no, that's not a good idea. No, it wouldn't be a good idea because I can't sing.

I certainly can't sing opera. But one of the problems I would have in singing opera is that most operas are in another language. They're in Italian. That's certainly the way it seems to me.

So if I were to learn the words, I suppose I could get the paper and the words and I could memorize them. And if I were able to sing, I could try and sing. But one of the problems would be that I wouldn't be understanding what I was singing. Of course, somebody who does sing very well could sing it very beautifully. But there would be that big problem that they maybe would be singing very beautifully, but they wouldn't be understanding what they were singing. If they don't know Italian, or if somebody hadn't explained to them what the words mean. And that makes me think of something that Paul says in the Bible. Paul is writing to a church in a place called Corinth. Corinth is in what today we know as Greece. And he was writing to the Christians in Corinth. And one thing he says that's interesting there is, I will sing with understanding. And what Paul is saying is that when I sing, I want to understand what I'm saying. So it's not just about it sounding nice, that's good, and when you sang it sounded beautiful. And that is important. It's important for it to sound nice and to sing as well as we can. It's important to sing with enthusiasm and to enjoy singing. All of that's very important. But in that verse, in the letter that Paul writes to the Christians in Corinth, he says, it's also important to sing with understanding. I will sing with understanding, says the Apostle Paul. And that's important for us as well. So that when we sing, we know what we're saying. And we can think about what we're saying. So what I want to do this morning is to think about that psalm that you've sung so beautifully. And think a little bit about what it means. So that the next time you sing it, you can sing with even more understanding. I'm sure that when you sang it this morning, you sang it thinking about the words. But maybe the next time, you'll just have a little bit more understanding about what it means. And everybody, I hope, will also have more understanding.

And so we can sing. And at the end, we're going to sing it again. So we'll be able to immediately put into practice this important matter of singing with understanding. So it's Psalm 100 we're going to be thinking about, okay? I'm going to use these bits of paper. And one of the reasons is it's going to help me remember what I have to say. Because sometimes when I'm speaking to you at a family service, I try and have it all in my head. And that makes me very nervous, because I think I might forget something. So with these bits of paper, it's going to help me, okay? I hope it helps you as well, but it's certainly going to help me. So Psalm 100. Now, let me just remind ourselves what it says.

See, if you can tell me, what's the first word in the first verse? Shout to the Lord with joy, all who to earth belong. What's the first word? Do you notice? Yes? Shout. Shout to the Lord with joy.

[4 : 23] So that's the first word. And we're going to notice that in the first three verses, each of them begins with something that we've got to do. And the first one is shout. Now, maybe we've only got to the first word, and we're already maybe thinking, well, what's that about? I don't know what it's like in your house, but in our house, we're not too keen on shouting. And if somebody's shouting too much, somebody, I won't say who, might be me, or might be somebody else, says, don't shout so much.

Because normally we don't think shouting is such a good thing to do. But here we have in the Bible, we're being told to shout to the Lord. So what's that about? Well, maybe if we think about shouting, although often it's not a good idea to shout, there are times when it's good to shout. For example, maybe if it's something very, very important, and we want to make sure that everybody hears about it, sometimes we'll shout, and it's a good thing to do. Or maybe if we hear something that makes us very, very happy, we'll shout. And then it's good to shout when something very happy, maybe some very good news that we hear. And that really helps us to understand why we're being told in the Bible that we should shout to the Lord. Because what we're saying is that it's so important to say to God how much we love Him, how thankful we are for all that He's done for us, that it's good to shout to the Lord. It's a bit like cheering. You know, if you go to maybe a football match to watch your favorite team, or maybe you're just watching your friends at school, and you're just watching the game, and you're cheering them on. And so you shout loudly, you're cheering them. And there's a way in which when we say shout to the Lord, it's like we're saying we're cheering God for all that He is and for all that He's done for us. So, shout. Then it goes on to say a little bit about how we're to do that.

It says that we're to shout to the Lord with joy. So, it's not really about making a lot of noise, though obviously if we're shouting it will be quite noisy, but it's about joyful singing.

The verse goes on to say about how we are to sing to God. So, we're to sing loudly. We're to sing joyfully to God. And it's important to sing with joy. And that's something we should remember as well, that when we are singing, when you're singing a psalm, or you're singing a Bible song, maybe here in church, or down at Sunday school, or at home, it's important to sing with joy. It's not good to be a miserable Christian. We've got lots of things to be joyful about. And so, in the psalm, it reminds us that when we sing, we are to sing with joy. Now, I wonder, who's to do that? Who is to shout to the Lord with joy? Is it just people who go to church? Is it just Christians? What does the psalm say? Let me just read it for you, and then you can notice what it says. Shout to the Lord with joy, all who to earth belong. So, who's meant to shout to God? Who? Yeah? Everybody. That's right.

Maybe you wrote that for me. Everybody. Everybody's to shout to the Lord for joy. Sometimes we think, and maybe at school, maybe most of your friends, maybe they don't go to church. Maybe they're not Christians. And you think, oh, well, only a few people are to sing to God and to shout to the Lord for joy. But the psalm tells us that's something that everybody can do. And maybe some people don't because they don't know God. And because they don't know God, well, they don't sing to God. And so, when we sing this, God is saying, now, you should invite other people that they could also know God so that they could join with us in singing. So, everybody is to shout to the Lord with joy.

[8 : 22] So, when we sing the psalm at the end again, remember, everybody, all who to earth belong. So, if you belong to the earth, don't think we've got any space aliens here today. We all belong to the earth. So, we're all to shout to the Lord with joy. Now, the next verse, it's really the third verse, but the next section begins with something else we're to do. Let me just read it. And you tell me what the first word is. Know that the Lord is God. He made us as his own. It's the very first word, Yoshi. Adore. Well, adore is very important. But the first word I said there, did anybody catch it?

Know that, yeah, Samuel. Know. Well done. Know that the Lord is God. So, that's the word I've got here. Know. I'm not going to say much about this because the first thing that we think about, I imagine, when we see that is, well, know what? What is it that we're to know? Well, let's see.

Well, the first thing that we're to know is that the Lord is God. I wonder what does that mean? Well, maybe you've heard on TV or maybe at school in PSE classes, you've heard about different religions and different gods, and some people worship one god, and other people worship another god, and some people don't worship any god. There seems to be all kinds of gods. And this psalm is telling us who is the true God. There can be lots of gods or lots of ideas that people have about gods, but who is the true God? And the psalm says that the Lord is God. And then you say, well, who's the Lord? Well, that same verse gives us a wee bit of a clue because it goes on to say, we are the sheep for whom he cares. So, it's speaking about this Lord who is God as the shepherd. Can you think of somebody in the Bible who's called the good shepherd? Who in the Bible is called the good shepherd? Yes.

Well, that's true. David is known as a good shepherd, but who else in the Bible is known as the good shepherd who gave his life for the sheep? Any ideas? Yeah. Who's that? Jesus. That's right. So, what this psalm is telling us, and even though it was written long before Jesus was born, it's reminding us that Jesus is God. He is the good shepherd. He's the one who loves us and cares for us. And so, when we sing this psalm, we should remember that, that we're singing about God, and we're singing about God's Son, Jesus, the Lord is God. We're to know that. But it tells us something else that we should know.

It tells us that he made us. The Lord is God. He made us as his own. We believe that God created everything. We were thanking God this morning as we prayed for the beautiful world that we live in.

[11 : 16] We believe that God made it. He made it very carefully and very specially for us. And the most important thing that he did when he made this world was make boys and girls, men and women. That's what he says. It's not because we're very proud that we say that, but because the Bible says that the most special thing that God made was men and women and boys and girls. He made us. And the psalm says something interesting. It says he made us as his own. He made us to be his, to belong to him.

And that shows us also how much he loves us. So, he made us. What else are we to know? That the Lord is God, that he made us. And what else? What does that say? If you can read my writing. What does it say?

He cares for us. He cares for us. So, after God made us, you know, some people think, well, yes, maybe God created the world. Not sure, but maybe. But he's not interested in everything we do every day. He's not a God who's involved in our lives. But the psalm tells us something very different.

It tells us that God didn't just make us, but that God cares for us. He cares for us in lots of ways. He cares for us by placing us in families to look after us and to love us. He cares for us by providing the things that we need, the food that we eat and the clothes that we wear, the schools that we go to, the fun that we can have, the minds that we have to think, and the bodies that we have to run and to jump and to do all kinds of things. He cares for us. So, we're to know that the Lord is God, that he made us, and that he cares for us. Now, I'm going to read the next part of the psalm and see what word we have at the very beginning that tells us something that we should do. We've already seen that we're to shout, that we're to know. Now, listen to the next thing. Enter his gates with praise, his courts with thankfulness. So, what was the first word there? Yeah. What was it? Enter. Very good. Enter. Now, what's that all about? Well, maybe we can see, and maybe when you go to school or you're in town, you're in maybe a big public building, there'll be a door that says entrance, and we know what that means. It means that if we go through there, we'll get somewhere. It's the door to get in somewhere.

That's what an entrance is for, and when the psalm says that we're to enter, it's talking about somewhere that we should go. Now, where are we to go? Well, the psalmist says, enter his gates with praise, his courts with thankfulness. And really, the person who wrote this psalm was thinking about what's known as the temple. We might call it church. He's saying, come into church with joy and with thankfulness. But he's saying more than that, because what he's really saying is that we should enter into God's presence. Now, we believe that God is here this morning. God is here with us. And so, when we come here, we're entering into his presence. But we also know that God is everywhere.

[14 : 26] Not just here. When we go home, God's there with us as well. Wherever we go, because God is everywhere. So, wherever we go, there's a sense in which we are in God's presence. But when the psalmist says to enter into his gates or enter into his courts, he's telling us about a real privilege that we have, that we can approach God. Though God is the mighty creator, though God is the one who is all holy, and God is so high and mighty, yet we can approach him. We can go and speak to him. We can be friends with him. We can enter into his presence. And that is something that's a great privilege.

And that we're all invited to enter into his presence with glad singing his name to bless. So, we're to enter God's presence. How are we to do that? Well, the psalm says we're to do it with thanksgiving. What that means is a little bit of what we've been thinking about already.

Thinking and saying how much we are thankful to God for who he is and for what he has done for us. And so, when we come to church, we come to say thank you to God for his love and for his goodness.

So, we enter his presence with thanks. And the psalm says something else as well. It says, your praises gladly sing to him. So, we're to enter his presence with praise. And praise is another way to say singing. Or singing is a way to praise. That's the way in which we can praise God by singing. It's a way of giving thanks. It's not the only way that we can give thanks to God.

We can give thanks by singing. But we can also give thanks by obeying God, by serving God, by doing those things that are pleasing to God. That's another way that we can give thanks to God.

[16 : 27] But praising God is one way, and it's a special and an important way. But I'm going to read the last verse of the psalm that we sung. And we'll think about that just for a moment. It says, For God the Lord is good, His love is ever sure, His constant truth and faithfulness through every age endure. Now, there in that verse, it doesn't tell us to do something. Really, what that verse is doing is giving us lots of reasons to do the things we've already been thinking about. We've seen already that we're to shout to God with joy. We've seen that we are to know that He is God, that He made us, that He cares for us. We've seen that we are to enter into His presence with thanksgiving. And then somebody might ask, and it's a very good question, somebody might ask, well, why should we do all of these things? And we've been thinking a little bit about some of the answers already. But this final verse gives us some very good reasons for doing all of these things. So why? Why should we do all of this? Well, the psalm tells us. He tells us that we should do all of these things because God is good.

God is good. He's not sometimes good, but He's always good. God is a good God. Everything that He does is perfect. Everything that He does is right. And very especially, He's good to us. He is a good God.

And that is a reason why we sing praise to Him and we give thanks to Him because God is good. What else does that verse say about God? Well, it tells us that God is love, that God loves us.

We know that verse, don't we? That very special and well-known verse that, for God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him and Jesus should not die but have everlasting life. So we praise God because He loves us, because He sent His Son to die for us. God is love. But there's another thing, one last thing that the psalm says in answer to the question, well, why? Why should we sing to God? Why should we serve God? Why should we obey God? Because God is faithful. Now, what does that mean? It's maybe not a word we use too much every day. Well, to say that God is faithful is to say, first of all, that everything that He says is true. Now, that's very important because we have the Bible that we believe is God's Word. When we read it, we can be confident that it's true. Why? Because God is true, and He won't tell us anything that isn't true.

God always tells the truth. So when in the Bible we have promises, we can be sure that God will keep His promises. So, for example, the Bible tells us that if we confess our sins, God will forgive us.

[19 : 23] We don't need to think, well, I wonder if He really will. No, God is faithful. He's true, so He will keep His promises. And another thing that's related to that is that God can be trusted. He'll never let you down. We sometimes let each other down. You know, I sometimes let my family down. I sometimes let my children down. I maybe promise something and don't keep my promise. Or maybe say I'm going to do something and it never quite happens. You know, I let people down and you let people down. But God is faithful. He never lets us down. And the final thing that the psalm tells us about all of these things, that God is good and God is love and God is faithful, is that He is all of these things always.

You know, maybe we can sometimes be good. And I'm sure you are sometimes good. Maybe you're often good, but not always. And maybe sometimes you can act in a loving way, but not always.

And maybe sometimes you tell the truth. Maybe lots of times you tell the truth. But I can, I know for sure that you don't always tell the truth. But God is always good. And He's always loving.

And He's always true. And He's always faithful. And that's why it's good to always sing praise to Him. That's why it's good that we sang Psalm 100 a few minutes ago. And it's good that we can sing it again.

Because it's always a good thing to do, to remember that God is loving and good and faithful. Now, I want to do one other thing, but I'm going to need your help. I'm going to, I know that you, the children, have all remembered most of what I've said. Maybe not everything. But I'm sure if I asked you, you could remember a lot of it. But mums and dads and grannies and grandpas aren't so good at remembering. I know that because I am a dad. And I'm sure you know that. Maybe sometimes people, your mom and dad, forget things. So we want to help the older people remember. So what we're going to do is we're going to get all of these cards. And I need to get, I need you all to come out. I need actually, I think, 17 of you. But if you all just come out and we'll see how we get on. If you come out and make a row, okay, some of you might share one between two. And we'll, hopefully I'll get them in the right order. Just in a long row along here, okay? I hadn't warned you about this, but you're all so clever that it's going to be very easy, okay? And it's nice and close together. Because if you're not close together, you'll fall off the side. And we wouldn't want that. Okay? So let me just get to the front here. Now how many have we got? And we're going to count how many people we've got. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 17, 18, 19, 19, 20, 21, 21, 22, 22, 23, 23, 23, 24, 23, 24, 23, 24, 24, 25.

[22 : 05] 25, okay. So we're going to do some, a little bit of sharing between. Right. Can you hold this and hold it up high? Okay? And if you could hold this one nice up and high.

Now, could you guys do it together? Now, Anya, do you want to come in just in there? That's fine. And do you want to hold it? Do you want to hold it, Anya? Yeah? How about we can go in a tree?

In a tree? I don't know. That sounds very complicated, Yoshi. It probably would be better, but we'll just do it in a line because I'm a simple fellow. Okay? So we got, do you want to hold that?

Yeah, okay. You guys share. Now, can you just go in between the two boys behind you there? Can you just make a wee space there? You just slip in there. There we go. Because we want to get in the right order.

Right. Okay. Now, it doesn't need to be too clear. Right. Yoshi, you can have this one, okay? You've answered so many questions. There we go. You want to hold that one?

[23 : 01] Now, do you guys want to share one between the two of you? Can you do that? Do you want to? Do you want to just stand right there? That's brilliant. Thank you. And there's a big Y.

And, oh, or, yeah. Do you guys want to just share one between two? And one between two down here? You can hold it right up, Ryan, as high as you can. And one between two here. Oh, brilliant. Look at that.

Excellent. Right. Now, now what we're going to do is we're going to do everything we've done again. No, we're not going to do that. We're just going to just say the words to remind ourselves.

Okay? So, Psalm 100, these are the things we have to remember so that we can sing with understanding. We're to shout with joy. Everybody. The colors here help me.

Know. What are we to know? That the Lord is God. That he made us and he cares for us. We're to enter God's presence with thanks and with praise. Why do we want to do all that?

[23 : 57] Because God is good. God is love. God is faithful. When? Always. Okay. Thank you very much. You can sit down. You can take those sheets of paper with you and do with them as you please.

Now, mums and dads are thinking, I wish he hadn't said that. But there you go. Within reason. Well, what we're going to do now, and with that we'll close our service this morning.

Thank you to the children for helping me out there. We're going to sing.