

Introduction:

True or false?

“God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.”

Ligonier ministries has a ministry called the state of theology where they survey a number of Americans to see what they think about Jesus Christ, the bible, truth and ethics.

Surveying 3002 people in 2020, of any belief, 63% of people said yes God accepts the worship of all religions. 13% of people said unsure. Well, that isn't surprising.

What is surprising is the statistics for the evangelicals that were surveyed. Out of 573 evangelicals surveyed, 42% of them said yes God accepts the worship of all religions, 9% unsure. So only less than half of them believed that God doesn't accept the worship of all religions. Now surveys are not always accurate, but they do give snapshot of a particular group of people, at a particular point in time.

We live in a society and a church culture, which has all sorts of different views on worship. Even within the evangelical world, we see different styles of church and music. Does God care how we worship? Well today, all I want to do is draw out some of the things Psalm 100 tells us about worship. We are going to be looking to God in Praise.

Overview:

Before we look at the details of the text, I want you to notice 3 things. The first thing I want you to notice is that this Psalm contains 7 plural imperatives. There are 7 commands for all.

In verse 1, “Make a joyful noise.” Verse 2: “Serve the Lord with gladness.” Verse 2: “Come into His presence.” Verse 3: “Know that the Lord is God.” Verse 4: “Enter His gates with thanksgiving.” Verse 4 again: “Give thanks to Him.” And finally, again in verse 4: “Bless his name”. 7 plural imperatives. And we like the number 7 because it is the biblical number of perfection. In our ESV translation, verse 4 translates the imperative as Enter, but it is the same imperative used in verse 3. So, we could translate verse 4 with come into his gates with thanksgiving. But you know, these 7 imperatives are so important because they give us the spirit of this Psalm. This is a psalm which invites and calls all to worship and praise God.

The 2nd thing I want you to notice is that the Psalmist doesn't only give us what to do. But he also gives us the how. The psalmist instructs our heart and directs our mind to the proper way to worship. You will see that by how the imperatives have describing words and phrases attached to them. Make a **joyful** noise TO the LORD... Serve the Lord **with gladness** and so on.

And finally the 3rd thing I want you to notice, is that the Psalmist doesn't only tell us what to do and how to do it but why. And in verse 3 and 5, the psalmist gives us the foundation of worship. He gives us the amazing reasons why. We will see all this as we examine the text together.

We are going to look at the passage in 2 parts. There are 2 stanzas.

1. Worship God (v1-3)
2. Gives thanks to God (v4-5)

1. Worship God (v1-3)

How does the Psalmist begin? “¹ *Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!* ² *Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!*”

I wonder if you saw it. Psalm 100 begins with an invitation not only to God’s people, but there is an invitation to all the earth. To all people. “¹ *Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!*” This is a call to worship to all the earth. Isn’t that an incredible thing to say? This Psalm is inviting the world to worship God. That is big thing to do. But it is an appropriate thing to do, because the world is God’s. And he is worthy of the world’s attention and praise. This isn’t the first time the Psalms has invited the world to worship. 2 examples.

Open your bibles Psalm 33:8-9, the Psalmist gives an invitation to the earth and the reason why.

“⁸ Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! ⁹ For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.”

Psalm 98:4 have identical words, *“⁴ Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!”*

It is not surprising that Psalm 100 begins this way inviting the earth to worship. In psalm 97:5 God is described as the LORD of all the earth. He is described in verse 9 of that same psalm as the most high over all the earth. And it is true, the earth belongs to him, and it is appropriate for all of creation to worship him. That is what makes this Psalm a great psalm for a call to worship, it is an invitation for all to worship. All the earth should respond to God appropriately when they recognise and see who the LORD is and what he has done for them and his people.

And so how are we to worship? Notice some of the describing words and phrases. We are to make a JOYFUL noise to the LORD. We are to serve the LORD with GLADNESS. We are to come into his presence with SINGING. JOYFUL, GLADNESS and SINGING. Can you taste the flavour of the worship? Worshipping God, entering his presence, serving him in worship, is to be flavoured with joy. Oh friends, brothers and sisters, do you come to God with joy? With gladness? With great shouts of praise? The psalmist is directing our hearts and minds, to a particular way of worship. God doesn’t want us to come to worship with a bitter heart. He doesn’t want us to come to worship unwillingly, grudgingly and with a complaining heart. Have you ever heard yourself saying, “Oh no... it is Sunday again, and I have to go to church, but I would rather be watching the footy and sleeping in.” You know, it is common for children as they grow up to not want to go to church. I know for myself when I was younger there were times that I would rather do so many other things on a Sunday, whether it was sleeping, studying, going out with friends, playing video games. And I would complain, but I would have no choice but to go to church. And I would come into church unwillingly, grudgingly. With a bitter heart.

God wants us to worship with joy and gladness and a great sense of willingness, and that’s what we learn here in Psalm 100. And we as Christians, as post-New Testament people should have more reasons for worship. Because of the gospel, because of Christ crucified and risen, our worship is to be flavoured with the

joys of the gospel and gladness. Christians can rejoice because of God's grace. Is your worship flavoured with great joy because of the gospel? Or is it flavoured with a half-heartedness, unwillingness and bitter heart?

Like I said the psalmist doesn't only tells us what to do and how to worship, he gives us the why. In verse 3, *"Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."*

The 4th imperative of the psalm is to KNOW God. It is to know that YAHWEH, the covenant keeping creator God is the only God. The original readers should know that it was YAHWEH who made them. It was YAHWEH who formed the Israelites and was good to them. It was YAWHEH who made them into a nation. Israel is God's people. But it is true for us as well. It is God the creator who made us. He gives us life. We are his creation. And in Jesus Christ, our great shepherd of the sheep, we are made his people and we are his sheep. Jesus is the good shepherd, who laid down his life for sinful men. And so, you see, the framework in which we come to God in praise is grounded in who God is, YAWHEH, the covenant keeping God, and all that he does. If you remember from last week, at the core of the psalmist depression in Psalm 42, is the inability to come to worship God. It saddens his heart so much that he can't come to God in the sanctuary. Why does it sadden his heart? Because he knows the value and the importance of worship. And so, friends, brothers and sisters, Worship God. Worship him with joy and gladness for who he is and what he has done for you.

2. Give thanks to God (v4-5)

The second stanza and our second point, Give thanks to God (v4-5)

⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! ⁵ For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

We get the imagery of entering the temple and presenting oneself to God. You can see the last 3 imperatives. *Enter his gates and courts, give thanks to him, bless his name.* And so, you can see the flavour is more or less the same. We are given the flavour of thanksgiving this time round. Worship as thanksgiving. Coming before God with a thankful heart. And so, to further develop some of the ideas that we have talked about. Is your worship flavoured with thanksgiving?

There is a Chinese lady who comes to Flemington Mission on a Tuesday. She is known as the thank you lady. Every Tuesday when we give her fresh fruit and vegetables, she bows a lot, and she keeps saying thank you thank you thank you. She says to me that she is so thankful for the mission and how the mission helps her. All she can do is say thank you. Thank you. With a great smile on her face.

"⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!"

That is the heart attitude we are to come to God in praise. A heart of joy and a heart of thanksgiving. God thank you, thank you. Thank you, God.

You will see in verse 5 the immediate reason for this thankful heart and a further foundation of the reason for praise.

⁵ For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

For the original readers, verse 5 summarise the heart of Israel's faith. "*⁵ For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*"

And there are multiple occasions where the Israelites are called to praise and thanksgiving as they remember these truths.

Psalm 106:1, "Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!"

Psalm 107:1, "Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!"

Psalm 118:1-4, "¹Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever! ² Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures forever." ³ Let the house of Aaron say, "His steadfast love endures forever." ⁴ Let those who fear the LORD say, "His steadfast love endures forever."

Do you believe that God is good? Because he is good indeed, and the psalmist draws our attention to his steadfast love. A key word in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word *Hesed*.

And many of the psalms use this word. "The steadfast love endures forever". Others translate it to covenant faithfulness and love, loyal love, loving kindness, covenant mercy, goodness, loyalty. You can see the flavour of these words. *Hesed* is a key word for the Old Testament. It is essential to who God is. It describes God's disposition towards his people and to humanity in general. It is a description of what God does. God has entered a covenant relationship with his people, and he is committed to himself, he is committed to his unchanging nature and infinite glory.

And so why should the original readers worship God with thanksgiving? Why should they enter his gates and courts with thanksgiving? Because of God's steadfast love which endures forever. And he is the God who is faithful to all generations. His covenant love and faithfulness never fail, and they worthy of praise.

And as Christians, we can say amen with the Psalmist, because God has given us his Son. I think of what Paul says in the book of Romans. Romans 5:6-8, a picture of God's great love for us.

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"

Or in 1 John 5:8-10,

⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

The gospel plays out God's hesed. God's covenant keeping love. It is demonstrated in the person and work of Jesus Christ. God's perfect one and only son, dying for sinful men, taking the wrath of God on that cross. Christ satisfying the wrath of God and purchasing for us new life.

And so, you can imagine why Christians can come to God in thanksgiving. OH GOD THANK YOU FOR JESUS. AMEN. THANK YOU GOD FOR JESUS. Because if it was not for Jesus, I would still be dead in my sins. If it was not for Jesus, I would not have eternal hope and new life. There are a multitude of reasons we can give thanks to God. And like in our Ephesians reading, we are called to praise and give thanks to God. Give thanks to God.

Application & Conclusion:

There will be times in life, where sometimes it is hard to come to church with joy and thanksgiving. Maybe there has been domestic problems. A fight between husband and wife, parents and children. Maybe there was a large argument before coming to church, on the way to church, in the 5-10 minute car ride. Maybe in your personal life, life just doesn't seem to be going well. Maybe sickness bring you down. Maybe there is pressure at work or in relationships. Maybe you have been working hard for something, maybe you have applied for something and you have waited for a long time for a result, and you don't get what you want, and you might be sitting there thinking, there is nothing to be thankful for.

Oh friends, brothers and sisters, look to the cross, and remember the gospel. The gospel should give you plenty to be thankful. It should fill your heart with great joy and thanksgiving.

Maybe this evening, you are finding it hard to worship God, because you are in sin. Maybe you are cherishing a lie from the world and the devil, and you are here this evening, feeling a little bit dirty or unclean. You can't serve 2 masters. Don't let sin rob you of the great joy and thanksgiving that there is in Jesus.

Maybe you have never had great delight. Maybe Sunday is like any other day. You don't get excited about coming to church, meeting with God's people, worshipping him, praying to him and hearing his word read and preached. Maybe you have never tasted the goodness of God. Maybe you have never tasted and experienced God's mercy and grace. And if that, is you this evening, if you find no delight in coming to God, you need to meet Jesus. You need to respond to the gospel. You need to examine your heart and see how sinful you are and your need for a saviour. You need to repent and trust in Jesus, because only in Jesus is there the forgiveness of sin. Oh, how I pray for you, that God would work his spirit in your heart this evening, to see how good and merciful and gracious he is, and that you would find great delight in him.

Psalm 100 is a great Psalm. It is a Psalm which challenges us and reminds us to worship God appropriately. What, how and why of worship. Praise God and give thanks to Him. (Read Psalm 100)