



Saint John United Methodist Church
12700 W. Hwy. 42, Prospect, KY 40059
stjohnky.com

Message for October 20, 2019
"Life Songs: A Joyful Noise"
Speaker: Pastor Tom Grieb
Scripture: Psalm 100

On Being a Fan

Cheryl and I went to the recent University of Louisville Boston College game a couple of weeks ago. It was a barn burner, decided in the last minute.

I hadn't been in a crowd atmosphere for a long time. If I was to characterize the crowd in a word I'd have to say it was "*exuberant*." Cheryl and I did our part to add to that "*exuberance*." I hadn't shouted and cheered that much in a long time.

I couldn't even watch the Wake Forest game the next week. Even though U of L got out to an early lead I knew it would end up being close at the end, which it was. I have a friend who teases me about vacuuming when a game gets close. He will call and ask, "*You got your vacuum out.*"

The Clemson game yesterday was in a word a tough one.

Pastor Walter Underwood tells the story of attending a Dallas Cowboys game. He too noticed just how much the crowd was into it.

He particularly noticed a man a few rows in front of him who was more than animated. In fact, when things got close and the crowd seemed to die down a bit, the man turned around and began to lead a cheer.

It was then that Underwood noticed that the man was a member of his church and couldn't ever remember him being quite that animated when it came to worship.

It's not at all unusual to get jazzed up at a ballgame. I used to stand off to myself when John was on the soccer team at Male. I didn't want to hurt my witness, if you know what I mean.

What Gets You Jazzed Up?

What gets you jazzed up?

It might be your favorite team? Maybe it's something your kids or grandkids are in?

Maybe it's the present election cycle? If that's the case, maybe we should schedule a counseling appointment. When it comes to the election we're all exhausted before we even get started.

When it comes to what you're passionate about, you might want to consider how you spend your time and how you spend your money.

What is it that gains your attention?

And in considering that, ask yourself, where does God fit into that mix? Are you worshipping him, first and foremost, or are you, in effect, worshipping other things?

As I have said so often, there are all sorts of things that vie for our time and attention to the detriment of our relationship with God.

Well-Focused Upon God

There is no mistaking the passion and focus of the Psalmist who writes the 100th Psalm. That focus is clearly upon God and the right worship of his holy name.

You might say the writer was all *"jazzed up"* about worship.

Psalm 100, of all the Psalms of praise, is probably the most familiar, and of all the Psalms, it is second only to the 23rd Psalm in recognition.

The words of the 100th Psalm express a deep, heartfelt desire for worship.

Hear what it says about worship:

- *"Shout for joy all the earth."*
- *"Worship the Lord with gladness."*
- *"Come before him with joyful songs."*

There are all kinds of reasons to go to church, and most of them good. Some people go to church for the fellowship, others for a place to serve. Some go for Bible study, while others go for the music. Some go for the preaching, while others go for the atmosphere.

Of all the reasons to go to church, worship should stand at the top of the list. No doubt that was the case for the Psalmist who wrote Psalm 100.

I can't go too long without worshipping God. I am always thankful to be in the presence of God. I am glad to have the opportunity to express myself before him.

As imperfect as my attempts at worship are, I take great pleasure in coming before the Lord with the intent of worshipping and praising his name.

As one of the few around here who attends all three services every Sunday, each one somewhat distinct from the other, I find myself benefitting from every one of them.

I encourage you to visit a service you don't regularly attend, if for no other reason, to get a feel for the entirety of the worship life of this congregation.

God Always Shows Up

The thing about worship is that God is always faithful to show up.

The style of worship matters very little, as does those who lead worship. God is all about showing up in the midst of those who earnestly seek to praise his name.

"Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I will be also," says Jesus in Matthew 18:20.

Identity

When I read Psalm 100 I hear a word about **identity**—God's and ours.

First, let's look at what the psalm says about God's identity.

The telling phrase is in verse 3 where it says, *"The Lord is God."* He is the one true God and is worthy of our praise.

He is the creator of all and before him we stand with awesome wonder. He is worthy of our adoration.

We worship the Lord not only with adoration for who he is, but with praise for the things he has done. Indeed the Lord provides in so many ways and because of that we need to give thanks.

Verse 5 reminds us that *"the Lord is good and his love endures forever, his faithfulness continues through all generations."*

This is who God is and we need to give him praise.

Second, in regard to identity Psalm 100 has a word about our own identity.

It very clearly states that we are a creation of God.

“It is God who made us, and we are his, we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.”

Think about that. It’s not that God just created us and put us on earth to wander about aimlessly. He cares enough to bend our way and transform us like no one else can.

He longs to be in relationship with us and nothing can nurture that relationship like worship.

Instruction

When I read the 100th Psalm I not only hear a word about identity, but I hear a word about **instruction**. If anything, we hear from this great psalm a word about **how** to worship.

First, we are instructed to *“shout for joy.”*

The King James Version has it that we are to *“make a joyful noise to the Lord.”*

I would much rather hear a *“joyful noise”* offered in praise, than a polished voice with very little spirit. Even if you can’t sing, go ahead and offer a *“joyful noise.”*

It happens all the time with any children’s musical we do around here. There is always a little one who sings a little off key and a little louder than the others, yet with all the exuberance in the world.

It was Johann Sabastian Bach who said, *“All music should have no other end and aim than the glory of God and the soul’s refreshment.”*

This from the one who signed every one of his works with *“Soli Dei Gratia,”* which means, *“To God be the glory.”*

Second, we are instructed to *“serve the Lord with gladness.”* Yes, service is an act of worship.

Hear what the Apostle Paul has to say about such things in Romans 12:1-2.

“Therefore, I urge you, in the view of God’s mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

Do not conform any longer to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.” Romans 12:1-2

I love that great hymn often sung at Christmas, *“What can I give Him poor as I am. If I were a shepherd, I would bring him a Lamb. If I were a wise man, I’d sure do my part. So what can I give him? I’ll give him my heart.”*

Let's worship the Lord by giving him who we are. Such is the act of true worship.

Third, we are instructed to *“enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; giving thanks to him and praising his name.”*

Let's admit it, you and I have every reason to be thankful.

Pastor James Merritt puts it this way, *“Thanksgiving is the password into the gates of heaven. Gratitude is the music that brightens the face of God. It is the spark that warms the heart of God and the love that kisses the hand of God.”* James Merritt

That's the power of thanksgiving.

So then, we are instructed to *“offer a joyful noise.”* We are called on to *“serve the Lord with gladness.”* We are asked to *“enter his gates with thanksgiving.”*

How Do You Come Before the Lord?

So then how do you come before the Lord?

- Do you come at worship hurried and distracted or haggard and despondent, or do you come with gladness and full of praise?
- Are you ready to offer your thanksgiving for the things God is doing in your life?
- Are you ready to offer adoration for who God is?
- Are you ready to come before him with songs of joy, even if those songs are a *“joyful noise?”*

Dr. A. W. Tozer once wrote, *“I can safely say on the authority of all that is revealed in the Word of God, than any man or woman on this earth who is bored and turned off by worship, is not ready for heaven.”* A. W. Tozer

Tozer hits it right on, because if anything, heaven is a place of worship. If we cannot engage in worship here on earth, for at least an hour a week, what are we going to do when we worship God for all eternity in heaven?

So let's *“shout for joy to the Lord.”* Let's *“worship him with gladness.”* Let's *“come before him with joyful song.”*