

Know That the LORD Is Good

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[0 : 00] If you want to open your Bibles or your Bible apps, turn to Psalm chapter 20, or chapter 100. If you're flipping through your Bible, you might miss it. It's only five verses long.

One term. That's it. Psalm 100. Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Serve the Lord with gladness. Come into his presence with singing. 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.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him. Bless his name.

For the Lord is good. His steadfast love endures forever.

And his faithfulness to all generations. The title on this psalm is A Psalm for Giving Thanks.

[1 : 12] Could also be titled, A Psalm for Giving Thanks Whether You Feel Like It or Not. That sounds a little forceful, but what I mean by that is, it could be a psalm for giving thanks when we feel like it.

It's also a psalm for giving thanks when we don't feel like it. Whenever we come to scripture, as with anything, we kind of come to it in kind of two modes or two moods.

They can be a positive mood or a negative one. And you might say, well, sometimes I kind of feel neutral. But I think when we're talking about praising God, if we come with a neutral feeling, that would probably fall into the negative or the bad mood category.

So, two moods, positive and negative. And we're going to approach both of those and see how this psalm fits for both of those occasions.

For the positive, joyful person who is just feeling good about life, they're into worshiping God. You know, they read and they meditate on this psalm.

[2 : 26] And it just adds encouragement. It adds energy to what we're feeling about the Lord. And it easily adds to our happiness as we read through these verses and increases our thankfulness in the Lord.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord. Everyone, Jew or Gentile, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness. Yes, because we know He is God, our God.

And we're filled with the thanksgiving of knowing who He is. But what about those times where we're feeling not that positive? We're feeling negative.

We're feeling negative. Mad, frustrated, depressed. Maybe we're just flat in our spirituality. And our worship to God just feels dry.

I think we have all been there. Hopefully we haven't been there long and stayed there. But that's common. Any of those feelings, right? Just feeling distant from God. Maybe you're going through a trial and you don't see God in that trial.

[3 : 31] Or at the end of that trial, it just seems ongoing. Seeking relief from struggles or just searching for a place of refuge. And you come to this psalm where it's wanting us to be joyful in the Lord and bless His name.

And you're just not feeling it. So how can we approach these verses that are calling us to do those things when we don't feel like doing those things? And that's what we're going to look at today.

Because in these verses, I think David helps us get a grip with those times where we're in those negative moods. It's only five verses long, but as we look at it, there's a structure to the verses that help us do those commands that were given in the verses.

So if we look at verses 1 and 2, we see actions along with emotions that should go with them. So verse 1, make a joyful noise to the Lord.

And verse 2, serve the Lord with gladness and come into His presence with singing. Now verse 3 changes a little bit from that.

[4 : 47] We don't have the actions and emotions we have, but we have knowledge. We have truth that connects back to those first two verses, right? So verse 3 says, know that the Lord is God.

And what else? It says, it is He who made us and we are His. And it keeps going. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. David says, know the Lord, He is God.

Know that the one we are called to be joyful in is our God, the one who made us, the one who owns us. And when I say owns us, it's not just owning us because He created us, but He's made us His own.

So it's deeper than just God owning us. It's a more loving relationship. There's that love and protection that He gives to us.

So this is what we are to know when we come into verses 1 and 2, when we're called to make a joyful noise and to serve Him with gladness. It's not just to do it forcefully, but do it with the knowledge of who God is and who we are in God.

[6 : 02] And let's take a look at the next two verses also because they have a similar pattern as well. Verse 4 says, Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise.

Give thanks to Him and bless His name. So again, we have actions, entering and giving, that are accompanied with emotions, right?

There's entering His gates with thanksgiving. That's an emotion. Thankfulness. Enter His courts with praise.

So we're giving thanks to Him. We're blessing His name. This entering and giving, they're connected with joyful emotions, right? The thanksgiving isn't a negative thing.

The praising and the blessing isn't negative, but they're positive emotions that go with those actions. So what if we're not feeling those positive emotions?

[7 : 04] What if we aren't feeling very thankful at all about anything, and we can't give thanks? We can't enter His gates in verse 4, as you said, with thanksgiving, because we don't feel it.

Well, let's look on to verse 5. It doesn't say, No, that the Lord is God, like it did in verse 3. But it says, For the Lord is good.

So the for is like a because. So the first four verses lays it out, pointing to verse 5, which it says, For the Lord is good.

His steadfast love endures forever. And His thankfulness to all generations. So just to recap on the verses, the first two have the actions and emotions we're called to do.

And then verse 3 is the truth that we should dig into to be able to do those when we don't feel like it. And the same thing with verse 4. Actions we're called to do.

[8 : 03] And then 5 is that truth that we can dig into when we don't feel like doing those times of blessing and giving thanks that we're called to do. So, in verse 5, if we see that we are called to know that God is good.

All the time, even when we don't understand what's happening. Even when we don't see God's at work. His love started before we were ever in existence.

And His love continues forever. It doesn't stop. And that's the steadfast love endures forever.

Before we were thought of and forever, as long as we can see into the future and beyond.

His love is steadfast, like it says, and never changing. Imagine if you've been around one. I think everybody here has.

But imagine a rock. Now, not just like a rock outside the school, but a big rock. One that you can climb around it on top of. And you could get underneath kind of an overhang of the rock and get shelter from.

[9 : 28] Back when I was little, we lived in Tennessee and there was a mountain that we could climb part of the way up and it had an overhang where you could look out and just see over like a valley.

And it was scary because it was high, but you didn't feel scared because of the rock. You didn't feel scared that the rock was going to let you down and it was always going to be there.

So imagine a rock that you can take refuge under. And you can leave that rock and you come back. That rock is still there, right? Life changes.

Storms come. But the rock never moves. The rock never changes. That's our God that never changes.

That's our refuge that never moves. That's our salvation. If we put our trust into it, that never changes and is always there and is always dependable.

[10 : 35] And then it says, it's faithfulness to all generations. Now David is saying this, but you don't have to take just David's words for this.

For the people of Israel, hearing this, this would remind them of a time back in Exodus where Moses was going to the mountain to get the Ten Commandments.

In Exodus 34, verses 6 and 7, when he's going to get the commandments, it says this, The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.

This is the words of God. So we have a promise here from an unchanging, never-lying God who says that he is merciful and gracious and slow to anger.

And we know that to be true, but to hear that from the words of God in keeping steadfast love for thousands, the idea is thousands of generations.

[11 : 52] So it's something that is just forever as far as we can mentally get a picture of. So it's God's unchanging character that we see here, and it's his grace and love and that character that never changes.

So to be reminded of that at those times when we struggle with whatever we're struggling with, you know, life just brings us down, a hard day at work, family issues, financial problems, spouse or girlfriend, boyfriend, or neither.

To be, to remember that we were made and that we were known and loved by a God who then chose to bring us into his family and promises that he will never leave us should give us hope and joy that really is incomparable to all the troubles that we have.

It doesn't mean those troubles go away. They're still here. But in light of all that, we're able to rise above it, still struggling with the problems, but know that we have a God who holds us in his hand and is able to take those, take us through whatever struggles we wrestle with.

So whether we're feeling mad or depressed or forgotten or worn down or just flatlined, we come to this psalm and if we do feel that way, then we start to look back at the truth that we know.

[13 : 37] We put our focus back on God and off of ourselves. Scholl says this, I've heard her say it several times to the kids when they're just struggling to be content and they're looking for the next thing and nothing seems to make them happy.

She usually pushes them to start filling out like a grateful journal. And it's when you start to remember all the ways that you were blessed and all the things that you have, you suddenly realize that you don't have so much to be sad and down and nothing goes my way and when's the next big thing going to happen?

Suddenly you see God's blessing in your life and it's because we get our eyes off of us and onto what we've been given and onto God that takes us out of that.

So, when you're struggling to find joy in God and thankfulness that just seems to be out of reach, start with these truths.

Start with what you know and you can read Psalms, you can pray. Oftentimes what's helpful is to preach it yourself as you're the one that's stubborn and holding on to that mood that is holding you down, that depression, that anger.

[15 : 00] And it's preaching back at yourself those truths that you know to be true. You just have to tell yourself that. Recount what God has done.

And then if you still find yourself in a mood that is just keeping you down, depression, sadness, whatever it is, then you just take that to the Lord.

You pray for Him to lift that sadness and that depression. And then you just continue on.

Reminded of the Psalms where David is talking about how he is just downtrodden and depressed and down. And the Psalm just changes and talks about how he looks to the Lord and he worships Him.

He doesn't say what changed his mind all the time. He just changes his focus, realizing that it's not our mood that is going to fix things, but it's our God that's going to change things.

[16 : 08] And what we're looking at, if we're looking at us, if we're looking at Him. And remembering that He is the rock of our salvation.

Nothing that we're going to find here in this world is going to be that rock, our refuge. So...