

The Foundation of Joy-filled Hope and Worship: Psalm 33

Sunday, August 21st, 2016

By Ryan Perry

Passage: Psalm 33

33 Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous!

Praise befits the upright.

² Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre;
make melody to him with the harp of ten strings!

³ Sing to him a new song;
play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

⁴ For the word of the LORD is upright,
and all his work is done in faithfulness.

⁵ He loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.

⁶ By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

⁷ He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap;
he puts the deeps in storehouses.

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.

¹⁰ The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
he frustrates the plans of the peoples.

¹¹ The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
the plans of his heart to all generations.

¹² Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!

¹³ The LORD looks down from heaven;
he sees all the children of man;

¹⁴ from where he sits enthroned he looks out
on all the inhabitants of the earth,

¹⁵ he who fashions the hearts of them all
and observes all their deeds.

¹⁶ The king is not saved by his great army;
a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.

¹⁷ The war horse is a false hope for salvation,
and by its great might it cannot rescue.

¹⁸ Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him,
on those who hope in his steadfast love,

¹⁹ that he may deliver their soul from death
and keep them alive in famine.

- 20 Our soul waits for the LORD;
he is our help and our shield.
21 For our heart is glad in him,
because we trust in his holy name.
22 Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us,
even as we hope in you.¹

Let's Pray

Introduction:

Sunday's are a joyous time to gather as God's people aren't they? We come and sing praises to our God together, and we learn more about our risen Lord and Savior as we sit under the preaching of His precious Word. We partake in communion with one another as we remember the body and blood of Christ that was shed for us. We fellowship with one another around coffee and donuts and the organic times that exist either before or after services to encourage one another in the Lord. This is a day where we gather for the joyous and hope-filled worship of our Lord and Savior.

Yet, I am convinced that for many of us Sunday's aren't a time marked by hopeful and joyous worship. In fact, I am concerned that we often come into this place on Sunday's with plastic pasted on smiles that if removed would reveal hearts that are not hopeful, but are burdened with fear, despair, and discouragement.

Fears about the future of our country in an election season that seems to makes us groan more than it gives us hope. Many of you, especially, recent graduates, have fears over the future direction of your life. Where am I going to go to school, what job or career am I supposed to have, how am I going to make it on my own?

Some of you are in **despair** over the lostness of your grown children or spouse. You're shaking your fist at God and saying "why God, why won't you save them?" Others have **despair** over mounting debt that seems so crippling that you can't figure out how to get out of it. And for others there is an endless array of physical and emotional issues that just never seem to get better.

Underneath those plastic smiles many of us are **discouraged** by a never ending list of personal global hardships and tragedies that for many seem like normal occurrences that will never end.

But do we ever stop ask the question why? Why are we full of fear, despair and discouragement? Why do the weight of our problems and the global tragedies seem crippling? Why do we often have false smiles instead of genuine joy and hope?

The Answer: Because we are viewing our problems and the world's problems in light of our ability, or really inability, to fix them or affect change within them.

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2001). (Ps 33:1–22). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

This means that we have either knowingly or unknowingly made ourselves the foundation of our hope, joy and worship instead of our triune God.

So this morning I want to call each one of us to turn our eyes and hearts away from ourselves as our source of hope and joy, and call us to once again stand in awe of our God, our Lord, and our Savior. **That through Psalm 33 we would see Him as our all sovereign, all sufficient, and all satisfying God who is our sole source of joy-filled hope and worship.**

We will begin our journey by first looking at our call to joy-filled worship in verses 1-3, then we will look at the cause of our worship in verses 4-19 and will end with our call to joy-filled hope in verses 20-22.

A Call to Joy-filled Worship

If you have your Bible's with you let's read once again Psalm 33:1-3.

- 33** Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous!
Praise befits the upright.
² Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre;
make melody to him with the harp of ten strings!
³ Sing to him a new song;
play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

At the onset of this Psalm, the psalmist (David) hasn't wasted anytime in jumping right into giving us actions as it relates to joy-filled worship. He calls us to shout for joy, give thanks...with the lyre, make melody...with the harp, sing...a new song, and play skillfully on strings.

These are not only corporate actions; meaning that they were meant to be done together in one place (Like a church service), but they are actions that call us to a joyful worship that is fresh, skillful, and passionate.

We as God's people, **those who are the righteous according to verse 1**, who have been made right with God by the shed blood of Christ are being called to make music to our God and Savior that is full of genuine praise and thanksgiving.

We are to make new songs as we see His mercy, grace, and power at work in new ways in our lives. We are to make music to Him that take skill and practice, not because we want to perform, **but because He is worthy of that which takes practice and skill.**

This is not some humdrum or dull gathering of God's people, but is one that is supposed to be full of life and joy. It should be loud, boisterous, and fervent as we ascribe to God all the glory, honor, and praise that is due His wonderful name. **And it is meant to be the mark of every believer. As David says "*Praise befits the upright.*"**

It is fitting and right for our worship of God to be full of **life and joy**. So that's the first call or command. **"Worship God with Joy."**

But the next question is why? Why should I worship God with Joy? This is where verse 4 takes us from the call to worship to the cause and foundation of our worship.

The Cause and Foundation of Our Worship

God is Our Faithful Creator

Psalm 33:4-9 says this:

- ⁴ For the word of the LORD is upright,
and all his work is done in faithfulness.
- ⁵ He loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.
- ⁶ By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
and by the breath of his mouth all their host.
- ⁷ He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap;
he puts the deeps in storehouses.
- 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.

These verses begin to unpack the cause of our worship as we are confronted with the nature and power of God. Verse 4 and 5 tell us that God is upright or righteous and that everything **he does is faithful** which also means that **He Himself is faithful**. He loves what is right, and good, and just, and has filled the earth with His unfailing love.

This means that there is never a time where God is not faithful to you and me, and there is never a time that God is not pouring out His infinite love upon us.

Are there are times that our desires are not met? Or times where we just straight up don't think that God has our good in mind, or we don't believe that He is going to come through for us? **Absolutely!**

I can imagine that some of us can think of times where we probably even felt like God was unloving or that His loved had failed us. But remember the words of David in Psalm 3:1-2 when he was running from Absalom:

*O LORD, how many are my foes!
Many are rising against me;
many are saying of my soul,
"There is no salvation for him in God."*

Now this could have been a cause for David to say that God is not faithful, and is unloving; yet, he immediately turns his complaint to trust as he says in verse 3:

*But you, O LORD, are a shield about me,
my glory, and the lifter of my head.*

Our God is faithful to us despite our circumstances, despite what we feel and or don't feel, despite what we see or don't see. Why?...**because complete and total faithfulness is part of who He is. He cannot do anything that is contrary to Himself. It is His nature.**

It is this faithful God who also is powerful and created everything. Verse 6 says that by His Word He created everything in the heavens. Verse 7 shows us the ease with which God created all the seas, and oceans and put all of the deep waters in storehouses. And Verse 9 shows that this all happened by His command. **God spoke and everything including you and me came into being and stood firm. That is the supreme and faithful power of God at work.**

But if the supreme power of God in creation isn't enough to cause you to worship, understand that the Word of the Lord that David speaks about here is the same Word spoken about in John 1:1-5 when he says:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

We know the Word that John was speaking of is Christ. This means that Jesus was not only active in the great acts of creation, as John says, *“all things were made through Him,”* but it also means that the creative power of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was and is at work in us. **He saved us by His death and at the same time is working by the power of the Holy Spirit to conform us to His image.**

This is the work of a faithful, powerful, loving creator and savior on our behalf that should produce an unceasing awe and reverence (verse 8) that causes us to fall down to our knees and worship Him. This should produce joy-filled worship.

But there's more. Because He is our faithful, powerful and loving creator and savior, we also see in this Psalm that He has plan for all of creation and for us as His people that will never fail and will endure forever. Look with me at verses 10-12.

His Plans Endure Forever

- ¹⁰ The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
he frustrates the plans of the peoples.
- ¹¹ The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
the plans of his heart to all generations.
- ¹² Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!

Now, I must admit that I am not good at always planning dates with my wife. In fact, if I were graded I think she might say that I am doing “C” work in that department, and even then she might just be being nice. But, this past my June wife turned 30, and I was determined to plan something for her birthday.

So I planned to go to a nice Mexican restaurant; I bought her some gifts, and did the work to get a babysitter so we could have a great night together celebrating her special day. **I must admit I was feeling pretty good about myself.**

Until she told me that she didn't want to go. Now she was not being mean, and she wasn't mad at me, but unfortunately she had a really hard day that day, and things were super chaotic with the kids to the point where she was really drained, and the idea of getting ready to go out seemed harder and more stressful than just staying home and having a low key night together...**so that's what we did, and my great plans came crashing down in a matter of minutes.**

But God's plans don't work that way. In fact, it is God, according to Psalm 33 who frustrates man's plans, and brings the counsel and plans of nations and empires to nothing. **But, His counsel and His plans never fail.**

This is the same God who made my plan for my wife fail, because He had a plan that He knew was better for her. He frustrated my plan so that His better plan could endure for the good of my wife and my family.

But on a much larger scale He is sovereignly in control of every person and every nation on the face of the planet, and He at this very moment is working to frustrate and bring to nothing the plans of men and nations so that His great and glorious plan can unfold.

A plan that works for His glory, and for the good of His people; **the ones, according to verse 12, whom He has chosen as His heritage.**

Now let me ask you: Do you see why this is good news for us? Do you see why this should produce joyous worship within us?

The almighty, sovereign, and unfailing God who frustrates the plans of men, has a better more perfect plan that endure forever. And part of that magnificent plan was that He chose us. He chose us as His heritage, which means that we are His inheritance, His treasure, and His delight. **Listen to this! We are the treasure and delight of our God.**

Again, this is the work of a faithful, powerful, and loving creator and savior on our behalf. And because we are His treasure, we can be confident that He will care for us, protect us, and watch over us. We will can confidently echo the words of Hebrews 13:6 which say:

*"The Lord is my helper;
I will not fear;
what can man do to me?"*

So if you are experiencing fear, despair, or discouragement this morning, my encouragement to you, and even to myself, is to remember that the sovereign plan of God was to make us His treasure.

And this God, has a good, righteous, faithful, and enduring plan for each one of us, as His treasure, that can never be changed or destroyed.

And if He brings nations to nothing and at the same time has a plan that can never be changed or destroyed, then He also must be the God who see everything. **Nothing escapes His sight or Judgement.**

Nothing escapes God's sight

Psalm 33:13-19 says:

- 13 The LORD looks down from heaven;
he sees all the children of man;
14 from where he sits enthroned he looks out
on all the inhabitants of the earth,
15 he who fashions the hearts of them all
and observes all their deeds.
16 The king is not saved by his great army;
a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.
17 The war horse is a false hope for salvation,
and by its great might it cannot rescue.
18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him,
on those who hope in his steadfast love,
19 that he may deliver their soul from death
and keep them alive in famine.

In some ways these verses are similar to what we just read in verses 10-12, but there is something within these particular verses that is both scary, and yet, refreshing and awe-inspiring.

The scary reality of verses 13-15 is that God sees everything. He sees every perverse thought and action that happens in this world and in our own hearts. We can't hide from God no matter how hard we try and neither can anyone in the world. **Even if like Jonah we try to escape God's plan and His sight we can't. He always sees us He always knows what is going on in our hearts; our motives, thoughts, and actions.**

Yet, it is refreshing to know that the horrors and tragedies that happen in our life and in the world around us don't escape God's gaze. He is not oblivious to tragedy nor does He turn a blind eye to it. **He observes and sees all the horrors committed by evil, men rulers, and nations, and as a result, as one who loves justice according to verse 5, judges them accordingly.**

These evil men are not saved by their armies, or chariots, or war horses, no they are seen and judged rightly by the almighty God. So all the horrors and persecutions that we see on earth and in our own lives can be cause for despair; yet, we know that the God who sees all will also judge all men rightly.

And though this is good news for us, it is only good news because God's patient, gracious, and unfailing love is upon us as His people; as verse 18 says: ***“the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope in His steadfast love.”***

So the same God who created and rules over everything (verses 6-9), and frustrates the plans of men and nations (verse 10), and who sees all and judges all (verses 13-17) **has also at the same time through and by His Word (which is Christ) created and formed a people for Himself whom He has chosen and ultimately redeemed to be His treasure (Verse 12).** And as His treasure, His caring and watchful eye is always upon us as He pours out His steadfast and unfailing love and grace upon us (verse 18).

This is the God who through Christ has delivered our soul from death, and continually sustain us even when it is hard and even when we want to give up (Verse 19).

When we take these truths and promises together we get a clear picture of our God that shows Him to be totally sovereign over our lives, totally sufficient to meet our needs, and the only one who is powerful, glorious, and loving enough to satisfy the deepest longings of our souls.

He is the only one who is worthy of or can produce a joy-filled worship within our lives, but He is also the only one in whom we can put our unwavering and joyous hope.

A Call to Joy-filled Hope

Psalm 33:20-22

- ²⁰ Our soul waits for the LORD;
he is our help and our shield.
²¹ For our heart is glad in him,
because we trust in his holy name.
²² Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us,
even as we hope in you.²

These verses are the culmination Psalm 33. Where right beliefs about God lead to right responses toward God. Where theology rightly believed and applied (Verses 4-19) leads to doxology or rightly placed worship (Verses 1-3, 20-22).

So my question is where is your unwavering hope? Is it in the triune God? Is He the one who makes your heart glad? (Verse 21a) Is He the one in whom your Heart is trusting? (Verse 21b) Do you believe that the unfailing and steadfast love of God in Christ is upon you even when there is much cause for fear, despair, and discouragement? Is your natural response to God fervent and joy-filled worship?

If the answer is no, I would encourage you to turn your eyes to the sovereign God who is not only totally sufficient to meet all your needs in Christ, but is your sole source of joy and hope.

² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Ps 33:1–22). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

Confess your need of Him, repent of your self-reliance, bath yourself in His Word, pray His promises, and watch as God begins to chisel away the unbelief of your heart that keeps you from the joyous and abundant hope and worship that God has instore for you as His precious treasure.

As Paul writes in Romans 15:13:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Let's Pray.