

[Psalm 100](#)

True Worship: Experiencing God's Greatness and Goodness

Introduction

Well, it's that time of year. It's football season. Whether high school, college, or the pros, many of us Americans are football fans. In fact, altars of worship have been placed in our homes, businesses and sports stadiums. There we view all of the games and get the latest analysis. Our televisions, phones and tablets become our worship center. Indeed, football can be worshiped day and night.

The truth is that we all worship something or someone. There's not a day that goes by that we don't worship. We might worship ourselves, our job, our family, our social status, or our material possessions. Human beings are indeed worshipers. But God calls us to worship Him. In fact, we are to worship God in spirit and truth ([John 4:24](#)). And when we worship God, we honor and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. We also keep in step with the Holy Spirit. He guides us into all truth because He is the Truth.

So, what does true worship look like? According to [Psalm 100](#), true worship is focused on the greatness and goodness of God. And we are to worship with joy and gladness, as well as thanksgiving and praise. In fact, there are specific words in this Psalm that we need to take note of. They are as follows: joyful, serve, singing, know, thanksgiving, praise, love and faithfulness. So, the main point of this message is that we worship God:

- With joy and gladness ([vs 1-2](#))
- For His greatness ([vs 3](#))
- With thanksgiving and praise ([vs 4](#))
- For His goodness ([vs 5](#))

Background

Although the writer of this Psalm is not identified, scholars believe it may have been written by David. [Psalm 100](#) is part of a series of songs and prayers which focus on praise, thanksgiving, and worship. In fact, God's greatness and goodness is the main theme of [Psalm 90-106](#), which is considered Book Four of the psalms as a collective.

Worship God with Joy and Gladness - [Psalm 100:1-2](#)

Worshipping God is all about heart-felt joy and gladness. Whether it's at La Crescent Evangelical Free Church (LEFC) or the church in Ghana, Africa, true worship over all the earth is marked by delighting in God. It means being zealous for God, whether it be singing praises to Jesus or serving Him and others.

For example, serving Jesus with gladness is an expression of delight in knowing God. Serving God with joy means serving in love and loving to serve. Do we delight in serving the Lord Jesus and His body, the church? Remember, as sinful human beings living in a broken world, we're prone to worship and serve things other than God. In fact, where is our joy and gladness most zealous? Is it in the success of our jobs or our favorite hobby? Or is it in gladly serving the Lord Jesus?

The Lord Jesus is our preeminent example when it comes to serving with gladness. Whatever the situation, whether it be healing the sick, compassion for the needy, or salvation for the lost, the Lord serves with gladness. That's because Jesus delights in serving His Father. We should delight in serving Him too. Here's what [Mark 10:45](#) says.

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.
[Mark 10:45 \(ESV\)](#)

Another way of displaying joy and gladness is by making noise. Now I'm not just talking about singing. Have you ever stopped and listened to the voices in the LEFC foyer before and after a worship service? The sound can be overwhelmingly loud. But that's a good thing! All of those voices are a signature of why we're here. It's because God desires us to come and worship Him with joy and gladness.

In addition, whenever the church gathers, whether it's for Sunday morning service, or a Tuesday evening prayer meeting, we are exhorted to come into the presence of the Lord with singing. Singing brings out true heart-felt worship. We're not just singing about the Lord Jesus, we're singing to Him.

For example, take a look at almost any of the old hymns or contemporary worship songs. You'll find the lyrics are based on Scripture that points to the goodness and greatness of Jesus. Here's an excerpt from one of my favorite songs titled, *In Christ Alone*.

From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny ([Psalm 139:16](#))
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand ([John 10:28-29](#))

So, why is all of planet Earth, including you and me, exhorted to make a joyful noise to the Lord, serve Him with gladness, and come into His presence with singing? Because of God's greatness.

Worship God's Greatness - [Psalm 100:3](#)

To worship God's greatness means to know Him, instead of just knowing about Him. If you're in Christ, you've been adopted as a son or daughter of the Living God. You know Him as Father. You're in His family. In fact, J.I. Packer, noted author and theologian, writes this in his book, *Knowing God*: "To be right with God the Judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is a greater."

Indeed, adoption is greater than salvation. That's because God's greatness is displayed in His supreme love for His adopted sons and daughters. To know God's greatness as Father involves a deep, abiding, intimate and everlasting relationship. Justification, which is being made right with God through faith in Christ, is certainly great. However, adoption by the Holy Spirit implies an even greater, tenderer, love. It's a love that emanates from the heart and not the head. It's sort of like book knowledge versus

experience knowledge. To look at pictures of the Grand Canyon in a book and know about it is one thing. But it's something totally different to actually experience the size and grandeur of the Grand Canyon with your own eyes. You don't really know what it's like until you're there.

To know the Lord is to experience firsthand His greatness. There's no doubt that He is God! In fact, Scripture states there is none like Him. He is the only true God. He is the Creator. Here's [Isaiah 45:5](#), [12](#).

I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God...
[Isaiah 45:5](#) (ESV)

I made the earth and created man on it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host.
[Isaiah 45:12](#) (ESV)

To know the Lord Jesus is to know that God is sovereign. He rules and reigns over the entire Universe. Since Jesus is God, He knows the finest details of every molecule and atom. He knows where and when every raindrop or snowflake ever fell, is falling, and will fall. He ought to know. He created everything. He holds all things together ([Colossians 1:17](#)).

Indeed, God is the Creator and Sustainer of all things. He created you and me in His own image ([Genesis 1:27](#)). A few weeks ago, John Young preached from [Psalm 139](#). It was emphasized that since God is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, He knows us completely. He knows all of our days, from first cry to final breath ([Psalm 139:16](#)). He cares about us. Here's a quote from John's sermon: "Who of the 8 billion people on earth are not precious to God?"

And with all of us 8 billion people, the Holy Spirit reminds us that all of those who have placed their trust in the Lord Jesus by God's grace belong to Him. The Holy Spirit guarantees that truth. If you're in Christ, you're not your own; you've been bought with a price – Jesus' precious blood ([1 Peter 1:18-19](#)). What once was lost has now been found. Jesus rescued you from a certain death. You were a lost sheep, but He found you and brought you into His flock. Even the black sheep.

Why does the Bible use the imagery of sheep so much, especially in the accounts of people and places in the New Testament? People in the Near East culture depended upon sheep for their food, clothing, and livelihood. Shepherding was a common vocation. Sheep are helpless without a shepherd to guide and protect them. Sheep are not smart. They tend to wander away. Here's [Isaiah 53:6](#).

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
[Isaiah 53:6](#) (ESV)

For those in Christ, we are to see ourselves as the sheep of the Lord's pasture. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. Because of His greatness as our Good Shepherd, Jesus can be trusted to lead us to green pastures. He leads us beside still waters and along paths of righteousness for His name's sake ([Psalm 23:2-3](#)). He always ensures that His sheep enter by the gate because He is the gate. And as the gate, the Lord always leads to a place of worship, where there is thanksgiving and praise to God.

Worship God with Thanksgiving and Praise - [Psalm 100:4](#)

This Psalm exhorts us to enter into God's presence with thanksgiving and praise. In fact, there is nothing greater than to be in God's presence. Here's [Psalm 84:10](#).

For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

[Psalms 84:10](#) (ESV)

Nothing could be better than to be in God's presence and worship Him. But it's easy to worship God, to give Him thanksgiving and praise, when things are going well. When health is good, success is in the workplace, and finances are adequate, hands and hallelujahs are raised high. But what about when life is in the gutter? What happens when there's health issues, marriage problems, and financial hardships? Would we, like Job, the man who lost his material possessions, most of his family, and his health, be able to say "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."? ([Job 1:21](#))

Whether in good times or bad, thanksgiving, praise, and blessing God's name honors Christ. That's God's call to anyone who would enter His gates. Think about this: Jesus is the only reason that the gates are open for any of us to worship God. Jesus is the only Way to God ([John 14:6](#)). Through His sacrificial death on the cross, the gates of heaven are open to all those who trust in Him. As the question was asked in last week's sermon on [Psalm 15](#): "Who shall dwell on God's holy hill?" The answer is: Only Jesus. And those who trust in Him by God's grace. That's the good news message of the cross.

Indeed, only through trusting Christ can a person enter God's gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. What gates will you be entering when this earthly life is over? Will it be the gates of heaven or hell? Will thanksgiving, praise, and blessing God's name be on your lips for eternity? Or will you be weeping and gnashing your teeth in hell?

If your worship involves dependence upon church attendance or charitable giving to make you right with God, that's false worship. Perhaps you've outright rejected God and the good news message of the cross. Either way, my heart-felt prayer is that you'll turn to Jesus. His goodness and greatness does not change. He is the same yesterday, today and forever ([Hebrews 13:8](#)). You can experience His steadfast love and faithfulness today. Repent and believe. Today is the day of salvation. There is no one beyond His reach. Believe me; I know.

What about those of us who have been secure in Christ, perhaps for decades? As Eric Mattie preached from [Psalm 67](#) a couple weeks ago: "Do we want God to be the God of

our neighbors, family and coworkers?" How's our desire to enlarge Christ's kingdom through pointing others to the One who is worthy of thanksgiving and praise?

But here's the thing: We don't always feel like giving thanksgiving and praise to God. Many psalms are laments. Yet even in our laments, in the valley of the shadow of death, we look to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. For all who trust in Him, He's the One who bears our sorrows. His suffering brings us peace with God. Here's [Isaiah 53:4-5](#).

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. [Isaiah 53:4-5](#) (ESV)

Thanksgiving and praise are certainly deserved by the God whose greatness is incomprehensible. So, too, God's goodness is deserving of worship and praise.

Worship God's Goodness - Psalm 100:5

Worship God for His goodness. Why is that true? He is the only true God whose steadfast love endures forever and His faithfulness to all generations. Throughout history, God is good, even in the midst of tragedy and triumph, joy and discouragement. Here's a quote from A.W. Tozer, pastor and author, which addresses this well: "It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply."

In Mark Vroegop's book, *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*, he shares the indescribable pain and sorrow of a stillborn daughter. Vroegop states the following: "The Bible gave voice to my pain. Particular psalms became my own. I read passages before, but I had never seen them or heard them like this. A years-long journey began. In that process, I discovered a minor-key language for my suffering: lament. Lament is the bridge between dark clouds and deep mercy."

Even in the hard times of lament, true worship allows us to experience the steadfast love and faithfulness of the Lord. God's love, which is the love of Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, is a love that's difficult to comprehend. The breadth, length, height, and depth is unfathomable. In fact, Scripture states that God's steadfast love in Christ surpasses knowledge ([Ephesians 3:18-19](#)). Jesus' love is strong as death ([Song of Songs 8:6](#)). Even in His power and might as King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus' goodness is very good.

In C.S. Lewis' classic book, *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, one of the children asks Mr. Beaver if Aslan, the great lion whose character represents Jesus, is safe. The response from Mr. Beaver is: "Who said anything about safe? Course He isn't safe. But He's good. He's the King, I tell you."

The hallmark of God's goodness in Christ is always reflected in His steadfast love and faithfulness. Scripture states that God's love, mercy and faithfulness never ends. Otherwise, we would be consumed. Here's [Lamentations 3:22-23](#).

²² The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; ²³ they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. [Lam 3:22-23](#) (ESV)

God's steadfast love and faithfulness can be seen all around us, if we take the time to look. For example, at the nursing home in La Crescent, LEFC has been privileged to have an outreach ministry there since 1994. Currently, we conduct a Bible study for the residents on Thursdays. Volunteers like Susan, Jim, Jeff, and Mary, who serve with me in this ministry, are greatly appreciated. We are blessed to share the love of Christ with the least, the lost, and the lonely. In fact, I believe our little group of volunteers are the ones who are blessed more than the residents. Experiencing God through worship and sharing His enduring love and faithfulness with others has that effect.

Where have you seen God's steadfast love and faithfulness in your life? Who is the Holy Spirit calling you to share the love of Christ with? Remember, God's love and faithfulness are perfect. His hesed, covenant-keeping love says: "I will love you and be faithful to you no matter what." That's really good news. That's who the Lord Jesus is. That's reason to worship Him in spirit and truth.

Conclusion

We are all worshipers of someone or something whether we know it or not. So, let's ask ourselves a question: Who or what do you and me worship? Is it a myriad of things other than God, including our jobs, our finances, or even football?

True worship is delighting and savoring the presence of God through Christ. To be in His presence means joy and gladness. Knowing God means that He is our Father, Jesus is our Elder Brother and Good Shepherd, and the Holy Spirit is our Comforter and Counselor. Entering the gates where God dwells is the pathway to enjoying His steadfast love and faithfulness. Truly experiencing God's greatness and goodness is to worship, appreciate, and live in His presence forever. Nothing can be better than that. Amen.