

PSALM 100
SHOUT FOR JOY!

Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands!
Serve the LORD with gladness!
Come before His presence with singing!
Know that the LORD, He is God.
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves.
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,
And into His courts with praise.
Be thankful to Him, and bless His name!
For the LORD is good!
His mercy is everlasting,
And His truth endures to all generations!

Have you ever shouted for joy? I don't mean just a "Yay." I mean an exuberant, unrestrained shout of joy—jumping, waving of arms, wahoo's! It's the sort of thing that happens at ball games--championship games in particular, or when striking gold! or at the end of the impossible and intimidating task of finding your wallet-full-of-money in a trash dump—before the payloader moves in. Shouts of joy! Such emotion and shouts of joy are not hard to understand for us who stand in the shadow of Easter Day. Jesus rose! We shall live again also!

Our text begins *Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands!* The words are addressed to "all you lands," not just to St. Luke's, or our CLC church body, or West River people in general, or North and South Dakota together, but to all lands. Imagine the roar if all lands and all nations of the earth would shout for joy at the same time to the Lord—to honor God above, in praise and thanksgiving! Do you ever shout to God, aloud? Or at least in your heart, or in your prayers? Perhaps all the Lord hears from you is dissatisfaction, complaining, and I want, I want, I want?

The Psalm urges us to make a joyful shout to God, and *Serve the LORD with gladness!* The Psalm not only encourage all the earth to praise Him, but to serve Him—to work for Him. To live and to do, with His best interest in mind, not just your own. Not just forget about His kingdom and His labors. WE are stewards of all the Lord's blessings. Serve Him. And do so with gladness. Gladness! Not, "I'll serve the Lord, when it doesn't interfere with my kingdom and my life—which seems to get bigger and more demanding every day." Or "I really don't want to serve the Lord with my skill, my time, and my treasures; but (sigh) OK I will." Not much gladness there, right? And by serving we mean living for the Lord in all avenues of life. *Come before His presence with singing!* Do you say, "Skip me on this one, OK?" Even if singing is not your best "suit," sing before Him to honor Him. It's not about you. Forget about your pride. Sing to Him. Whether you're a good singer or not, you do join in with Happy Birthday to someone who means a lot to you, don't you? And you don't just stand in the other room, do you? You stand before their face, in their presence. Sing for joy to the Lord. It's all about honoring Him who is very special—honoring from the depths of your heart.

OK, WHY? WHY? WHY? Why shout with joy to the Lord, why serve Him with gladness, why come before His face with singing? *Know that the LORD, He is God. It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.* "Know" that the LORD is God. Such "knowing" isn't just knowing "of" someone. It's knowing them from observation, from dealing, from experience. So then, realize that the LORD is "God"—the Mighty One. There is no one higher than He. Has He dealt in your favor in most powerful ways? The time the doctor said there was no way you should have gotten well, the time the sheriff and the first responders said there was no way you should have survived, the year that you should have suffered huge losses but didn't. God deals with you in love.

Why else? The text gives another example. *It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves.* How did you get to this life? Was it just luck, or fate, or chance? It was God who knit you together in your mother's womb and brought you to life. You are not a self-made man by origin. Nor are you a self-made man even in your "successes" in life—no matter how low you started. It is God who has blessed you every day and brought you where

you stand right now. ***We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.*** You belong to Him. You're one of His sheep. A pasture is not just a place like a pen or a corral. A pasture is a place of nourishment and care. The LORD cares for you. Remember the words of "I Am Jesus' Little Lamb?" 1) *I am Jesus' little lamb, Ever glad at heart I am; For my Shepherd gently guides me, Knows my need, and well provides me, Loves me ev'ry day the same, Even calls me by my name.* 2) *Day by day, at home, away, Jesus is my Staff and Stay, When I hunger, Jesus feeds me, Into pleasant pastures leads me; When I thirst, He bids me go Where the quiet waters flow.* 3) *Who so happy as I am, Even now the Shepherd's lamb? And when my short life is ended, By His angel host attended, He shall fold me to His breast, There within His arms to rest.* It is the stubbornness of the devil that will seek to make you stubborn and not about to shout with joy to Him, serve Him, and sing to His honor.

The Psalm extols your situation before God in yet further ways. ***Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name!*** Can you imagine, or do you remember, walking into the entrance of a magnificent building? Maybe the U.S Capitol, the White House, or Neuschwanstein Castle in Germany. What wonder, amazement and thankfulness you felt that you were privileged to be part of that experience. You of all people. Or maybe it was a sight in the wild of nature? You have no inherent right to stand there—no special connections. It's as if a cow came plodding into your office or living room. What is that beast doing here? That's how it is for a sinner to stand in the presence of God. But you are invited into His gates and courts and into the presence of the Lord. The Psalm writer says, Stand there with thanksgiving and praises, and ***Bless His name.*** Does that phrase makes you wonder? How can you "bless" the Lord? You can't do anything for Him that He doesn't already do for Himself. He blesses you. How can you bless Him? The root meaning of the Bible word for bless is to "praise, honor, say nice things about." We do not bless the Lord in "deeds," but we praise the Lord in words. We praise all that He has done and will do. We praise His reputation—His good "name"—our Savior and God.

Do you still ask, Why do all this? The Psalm continues in more glorious fashion. ***For the LORD is good! His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations!*** The LORD is "good." "Good" describes all things at Creation. At the end of days 3, 4, 5, "God saw that it was good." The 6th day ends, "And God saw all that He had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1). "Good" describes perfection, pleasantness, rightful use of power, integrity, and more. That is God. He does not seek to harm you. God is love. He sent His Son for you, a sinner. Jesus gave up His glory and His life, so that you may live again forever. Without God's Son you would be lost. You're not good enough on your own. But in Him you are forgiven! Trust Him! Praise Him!

His mercy is everlasting. Day after day, you are able to come to Him and ask again for forgiveness for your trespasses and sins. "God, have mercy on me a sinner!" And through Jesus, your request is granted. Because of all He did for you, you are declared spotless and clean. The Hebrew word for "mercy" describes a king who loves and helps his people every day. His love and help can be counted on. God's mercy is everlasting. Praise Him!

His truth endures to all generations! The truth of God is that which stands forever and is not false. It is stable, lasting, dependable, wholesome, just. It is like a 2x4 that is "true" or a gun barrel that is "true." God always hates sin. God always loves the sinner. God sent Jesus to rescue sinners. God forgives for Jesus' sake. With sins forgiven, death cannot hold you. With sins forgiven, the devil and hell cannot claim you. You will be raised to eternal life on the last day. Just as God put Adam together out of the dust of the ground on Day 6 of Creation, He will put you back together from the dust of the ground on Judgment Day. You will not be a self-made man then either. He will take you to the mansions of heaven. In Jesus, praise His enduring Truth!

It is in the risen Christ. that the full depth of this Psalm rings out!

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So be it! Amen!

Pastor Kanzenbach---