

SUMMER IN THE PSALMS: + SLIDE 1: COME AND SEE

A SONG I STILL REMEMBER

There are some words of Scripture that we don't simply remember with our minds; **we remember them with our ears.** We can almost hear them again. **Psalm 66:1 is like that for me.**

Years ago, when I sang in the Carrickfergus Gospel Male Choir, one of the highlights of the year was our massed choir festival.

Voices would come together, not just a handful of singers but a great company, and the theme that stood over that annual gathering was the opening call of Psalm 66: “*sing forth the honour of His name, make His praise glorious.*”

I can still think of those words and hear something of the sound behind them. There's something stirring about many voices becoming one voice. Different men, singing in four-part harmony, different backgrounds, **but one song.** And that's exactly the picture with which Psalm 66 begins.

The psalmist does not whisper, “Perhaps a few religious people might like to praise God.” **He throws open the doors and summons the world: let the whole earth praise Him!**

Psalm 66 is a psalm with its windows wide open. It's full of movement, sound, gratitude, testimony and invitation.

It begins with a **SHOUT**, continues with a **SONG**, calls us to **SAY** something about God, asks us to **REMEMBER** His works, and then reaches out to the watching world with three unforgettable words: **COME AND SEE.**

That's where I want us to go this morning. Christianity was never intended to be a dull recital of religious facts. The Gospel gives us something to sing about, something to say, something to remember, and Someone to invite others to come and see.

SHOUT — OUR PRAISE SHOULD BE JOYFUL Psalm 66:1

“*Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth!*” The first word is not timid. It's a summons. The psalmist is calling for praise that is alive, because the God being praised is alive.

There is a place for quietness before God. Scripture tells us to be still and know that He is God. There are moments when worship is reverent silence, when words seem too small. But Psalm 66 reminds us that reverence and joy are not enemies. **Sometimes gratitude becomes too large to remain silent.**

The old KJ wording, “*Make a joyful noise unto God,*” has always encouraged me. It doesn't say, “**Make a perfect noise.**” It doesn't say, “Only those with trained voices may participate.” God is not conducting an audition. **He's receiving the praise of grateful believing hearts.**

That's an important word for the church. Worship is not a performance by a few people at the front while everyone else observes. **Worship is the response of redeemed people to a worthy God.** The congregation is not the audience; **God is. Every believer has a reason to praise Him.**

Think of what Christ has done for us. We were guilty, and He forgave us. We were lost, and He found us. We were far from God, and through the cross He brought us near. We were without hope, and He gave us eternal life. **If anyone has reason for joy, it's the people of God.**

Our circumstances will not always be joyful. Psalm 66 itself later speaks of testing, burdens, fire and water. **Biblical joy is not pretending that life never hurts.** It's the settled gladness that says: even here, God is still God; His grace is still sufficient; His promises are still true.

So the first question from the psalm is very simple: **has our faith become so familiar that we have forgotten the awe and wonder of it?** When did we last thank God simply because we belong to Christ? When did salvation last put a song in our hearts?

SING — OUR PRAISE SHOULD CENTRE ON GOD'S NAME Psalm 66:2

Verse 2 moves from shouting to singing: *"Sing out the honour of his name! make His praise glorious."* These were the words on the Order of Service bulletin header at our male voice choir festival Gospel outreach. **His name, His praise, His greatness.**

Worship can easily become centred on us, what I like, what moves me, what style I prefer, whether the hymn was familiar, whether the music suited me. **Psalm 66 redirects our eyes. Worship asks a better question: What does God deserve?**

The honour of His name means the glory of who He is. He is holy. He is faithful. He is merciful. He is powerful. He is just. He is patient. He is the God who keeps covenant, hears prayer, forgives sin and does not abandon His people.

And for Christians, the name above every name is Jesus. We sing because God has made Himself known to us in His Son.

At Bethlehem, God came near. At Calvary, love paid the price. At the empty tomb, death was defeated. At the right hand of the Father, Jesus reigns. And one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord.

A healthy church should be filled with God-centred praise. Not praise of personalities, programmes or achievements, but praise that makes much of Jesus. **The best worship leaves us thinking less about the singers and more about the Saviour.**

SAY — OUR PRAISE SHOULD BECOME TESTIMONY Psalm 66:3

Verse 3 says, *"Say to God, 'How awesome are your works!'"* **Praise is not only something we sing; it's something we say.** The psalmist wants the people of God to put their gratitude into words.

There is power in a simple testimony. We sometimes imagine that a testimony must be dramatic to matter. **It does not.** "God carried me through." "The Lord answered prayer."

“Christ forgave me.” “His Word gave me strength.” “I did not know how I would face tomorrow, but His grace was there.” **Those are powerful words because they point beyond us to Him.**

The early church grew in a world that was often hostile to its message, yet believers could not keep silent about what they had seen and heard. The Gospel travelled from person to person, home to home, town to town, **because ordinary Christians had something to say about an extraordinary Saviour.**

Our world needs believers who can speak sincerely about what God has done. We don't need to win every argument. We don't need to have an answer to every question. But there is one thing another person cannot take away from us: **the awesome reality of what Christ has done in our lives.**

Perhaps one of the most important questions we can ask ourselves is this: if someone asked me this week, **“What difference does Jesus actually make in your life?” what would I say?** Psalm 66 calls us to have an answer, not a rehearsed speech, but a grateful testimony.

REMEMBER — GOD'S WORKS GIVE US CONFIDENCE Psalm 66:5

Psalm 66 is a psalm that looks at the greatness of God but also looks back. The psalmist says, *“Say to God, ‘How awesome are your works!’”* and then, *“Come and see what God has done.”* **In other words: Remember what God has done.**

We're often very good at remembering what went wrong. We remember the disappointment, the hurt, the prayer that seemed to go unanswered, the person who let us down, the door that closed.

But Scripture repeatedly calls God's people to remember something else: remember the Lord; remember His goodness; remember His faithfulness; remember what He has done.

How Do You Remember God's Work in Your Life?

If I were to give each of us a few quiet moments this morning and ask, “How do you remember God's work in your life?” **where would your mind go?**

Maybe you remember a time when you didn't know what you were going to do, but somehow God made a way. Maybe you remember a prayer God answered in a way you could never have arranged yourself.

Maybe you remember carrying a burden that seemed unbearable and yet looking back now you realize: “The Lord carried me.”

Maybe you remember a hospital room, standing beside the grave of someone you loved, a financial crisis, a family difficulty, a season of loneliness, or a decision when you desperately needed direction.

Maybe you remember a time when your faith was weak, and you wondered whether you could keep going.

But here you are. God brought you through. Perhaps He didn't bring you through exactly as you expected. Perhaps He didn't answer every question or remove every difficulty. But looking back, you can see things today that you could not see then. **You can say: “God was there.”**

Sometimes remembering God's work means remembering the people He placed in our lives.

Think of the Sunday School teacher who first taught you the stories of Jesus; the pastor whose sermon spoke directly to your heart; the friend who invited you to church.

The Christian friend who prayed with you; the person who telephoned at exactly the right moment; the mother or father who taught you to pray; the believer whose quiet consistent life showed you what following Christ looked like.

At the time, they may have seemed like ordinary people doing ordinary things. **But looking back, you realize: God was using them.** They were part of His work in your life.

WE SHOULD EVEN REMEMBER SOME OF THE DOORS GOD CLOSED

At the time, we were disappointed. **We prayed for something and it did not happen.** We wanted to go in one direction and the way was blocked. We could not understand why God would allow it.

But years later we look back and say, "Thank You Lord, that You did not give me what I asked for." **There are some blessings we recognize immediately, and there are other blessings that we only recognize in the rear-view mirror.**

Sometimes God's "No" was protection. Sometimes God's "Wait" was preparation. Sometimes God's detour was actually His direction.

REMEMBER WHERE CHRIST FOUND YOU

But above everything else, the Christian has one great thing to remember: remember where Christ found you. **Remember what you were without Him.**

The first thing I would remember is a cold dark December night in a little Baptist church in Carrickfergus N. Ireland and responding to the call of God on my life. **Home, Parents, Lamp, Candle.**

Remember when the Gospel became more than a Bible story and you understood: Christ died for you.

Remember when you trusted Him. Remember the burden of sin being lifted.

Remember discovering that you were forgiven. Remember realizing that eternal life was God's gift and not something you could earn.

Sometimes we sing, "Count your blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done."

There is wisdom in that old hymn, because when today's trouble becomes very large, yesterday's faithfulness can become very small in our memory. **We need to deliberately remember.**

THE GREATEST PLACE TO LOOK BACK

And when our memory fails us, there is one place every Christian can always look: **look back to the cross.**

The cross says: “God loves you.” The empty tomb says: “There is hope.”

YESTERDAY’S FAITHFULNESS FOR TODAY’S UNCERTAINTY

Faith doesn’t mean that we know the future. Faith means that we know the God who holds the future.

Sometimes the best way to face what is ahead is to stop for a moment and remember what is behind. Ask yourself: Has God ever been faithful to me before?

Remember the God who was faithful THEN is still faithful NOW. **Yesterday’s faithfulness becomes encouragement for today’s uncertainty.**

That’s exactly why the next words of the psalm are so powerful. When you have remembered what God has done, traced His faithfulness through the years, looked again at the cross, and remembered His grace in your own life, **you suddenly have something worth telling somebody else.**

And that brings us to the wonderful invitation of verse 5.

COME AND SEE — OUR PRAISE SHOULD BECOME AN INVITATION

“Come and see what our God has done, Here the whole sermon turns outward. The psalmist has shouted. He has sung. He has spoken about God’s deeds. **He has remembered.**

Now he looks at others and says, **“Come and see.”** True worship does not end with ourselves. **When we’ve seen something wonderful, we want somebody else to see it too.**

Those words echo through Scripture. When **Philip** met Jesus and **Nathanael** was skeptical, Philip did not launch into a complicated debate. **He simply said, “Come and see.”**

When the Samaritan woman encountered Jesus, she went back to her town and said, *“Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did.”* The invitation of faith is wonderfully simple: **come and see.**

Come and see the Christ who receives sinners. Come and see the Saviour who touches broken lives. Come and see the cross where mercy and justice meet. **Come and see the empty tomb where hope walks out of the grave.**

The church must never become a closed circle of people enjoying blessings among themselves. Every Sunday gathering should remind us that there are people outside these walls who need hope, forgiveness, purpose and a Saviour.

We’re not called merely to say, “Come to our church.” **We are called to say, “Come and see Jesus.”**

There is a difference. Our church cannot save anyone. A pastor cannot save anyone.

Music cannot save anyone. **But Jesus can.** Therefore the great invitation of the church is not “Come and admire us.” **It’s “Come and see Him.”**

A PERSONAL PICTURE — FROM A MASSED CHOIR TO A GREATER SONG

When I think back to those massed choir festivals in Carrickfergus, I remember the strength that came when many voices joined together around the words of Psalm 66. **One voice has its sound; hundreds of voices together have another kind of power.**

But Scripture points us toward a far greater gathering. Revelation gives us glimpses of a multitude no one can number, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and praising Jesus. **Psalm 66 begins to sound almost prophetic: “all the earth” praising God.**

What a day that will be. No weak voices. No sorrow interrupting the song. No funeral bells. No hospital rooms. No goodbyes. The redeemed of the Lord gathered around the throne, and Jesus at the centre.

Every time the church sings now, we’re rehearsing for then. Every sincere word of praise is a small foretaste of the day when faith becomes sight, and the song of redemption fills eternity.

WHAT WILL PEOPLE HEAR AND SEE IN US?

Psalm 66:1–5 gives us a vivid progression: **SHOUT** with joy. **SING** of His glory. **SAY** what He has done. **REMEMBER** His mighty works. Then turn to others and say, **COME AND SEE.**

That’s the challenge for us this morning. Is there enough joy in our faith for anyone to notice?

Is there enough gratitude in our conversation for anyone to ask why? Is there enough evidence of Christ in our lives that our invitation has credibility?

The most convincing “Come and see” is spoken not only by our lips but by a life changed by Jesus.

Years ago, these words rang out over a massed gospel choir festival in a small town in Co. Antrim, N. Ireland.: *“Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious”*

Today they still ring out, but the invitation of verse 5 brings them very close to home.

COME AND SEE WHAT GOD HAS DONE.

Come and see His grace. Come and see His faithfulness. Come and see the cross.

Come and see the empty tomb. Come and see Jesus.

And when you truly see Him, you will discover why the people of God can sing. *“Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious”*