

Summer In the Psalms

Joy That Cannot Be Contained

“Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth! Worship the LORD with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy.” Psalm 100:1–2 NLT

Whatever Happened to Our Joy?

There are some emotions that are difficult to hide.

When a child is excited, you usually know it.

When someone receives wonderful news, it shows on their face.

Joy has a way of expressing itself.

Joy smiles. Joy sings. Joy celebrates. Joy tells somebody.

And when we come to Psalm 100, we meet a joy that simply **cannot be contained**.

Listen to the opening words: *“Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth!”*

Then: *“Worship the LORD with gladness.”*

And then: *“Come before him, singing with joy.”*

Psalm 100 is a psalm overflowing with joy.

There is joy in its worship. Joy in its singing. Joy in its thanksgiving.

Joy in belonging to God. Joy in knowing God’s goodness. Joy in experiencing God’s love.

Joy in trusting God’s faithfulness.

And this Psalm raises a very challenging question for the church today:

Whatever Happened to Our Joy?

Of all people on the face of the earth, Christians have reason to be joyful.

Our sins are forgiven. Our guilt has been removed. Christ has risen. Death has been defeated.

God is our Father. Jesus is our Saviour. The Holy Spirit lives within us. Heaven is our home.

We have promises that cannot be broken. We have a Saviour who will never leave us.

Psalm 100 calls us back to something fundamental: **There Is Joy in Knowing God!**

Not superficial happiness. Not pretending that life is easy.

Not putting on a religious smile when your heart is breaking.

Something far deeper. Something the world cannot give.

Something trouble cannot necessarily take away.

It's the joy Peter describes: "You rejoice with **joy unspeakable and full of glory.**" 1 Peter 1:8

I love that expression. Joy unspeakable.

This is a Joy so deep that words cannot adequately describe it.

This is a Joy that rises from somewhere deeper than our circumstances.

This is a Joy that Jesus puts in the innermost part of our lives when he saves us.

And Psalm 100 shows us why that joy can be ours.

1. Joy Begins When We Look Up Psalm 100:1

"Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth!"

Notice where the Psalm begins. It doesn't begin with us. It begins with **the Lord.**

That is one of the great secrets of Christian joy.

Our Joy Has an Object - "Shout with joy to the LORD."

The Psalmist redirects our attention away from ourselves and toward God.

And oh, how we need that.

Because if we constantly look at ourselves, we will find plenty to discourage us.

If we constantly look at the world, we will find plenty to frighten us.

If we constantly look at other people, eventually somebody will disappoint us.

If we constantly look at our circumstances, it can rob us of joy.

But when we look up—**God is still God.**

The God who was faithful to us yesterday is faithful today.

The God who carried us before will carry us again.

The God who answered prayer before still hears prayer today.

The God who saved us has not changed His mind about us.

Joy Is Not the Absence of Trouble

We need to understand this clearly. Christian joy does not mean Christians don't hurt.

Jesus wept. Paul suffered. David knew heartbreak. Job grieved.

The Psalms themselves contain tears, questions, disappointments and lament.

Christian joy is not denying pain.

It's discovering that **pain does not get the final word.**

Paul wrote some of his most joyful words while imprisoned: Philippians 4:4 NLT

"Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again, rejoice!"

He doesn't say: **"Rejoice in your circumstances."**

He says: **"Rejoice in the Lord."**

There will be days when we cannot rejoice in what has happened.

But we can still rejoice in **who God is.**

There will be circumstances we cannot celebrate.

But we can celebrate **the faithfulness of God within them.**

Our Circumstances May Change. Our God Does Not

That is where joy begins. **Look up.**

2. Joy Grows When Worship Becomes Delight Psalm 100:2

"Worship the LORD with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy."

In our text this morning we hear the words of the Psalmist as He talks about true worship. There's something precious here, something more than just singing and preaching.

Something more than the familiarity of weekly services that seldom touch our hearts and leave us unmoved. **We come and go just as we came in.**

Maybe within your heart beats a deep desire for a worship experience that is much more powerful than mere religious entertainment. You long for a moving and visitation of the Spirit that will fire your spiritual zeal and intensity in such a way that your spirit will soar heavenward in praise.

"Worship the LORD with gladness."

Worship Is a Privilege, not a Chore

Psalm 100 reminds us what an extraordinary privilege worship really is.

We're invited into the presence of the Creator of the Universe.

Think about that. The God who made the galaxies invites us to come.

The God who hung the stars in space listens when we pray.

The God who holds the universe together knows your name.

And we get to worship Him! Is it any wonder David wrote;

“I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the LORD” Psalm 122:1 NLT

I was glad. There ought to be genuine gladness about gathering with God’s people.

Joyful Worship Is Contagious

Have you ever noticed that joy spreads? A joyful Christian encourages other Christians.

A thankful Christian reminds other Christians of God’s goodness.

Never underestimate what your worship may mean to somebody else.

There’s something powerful about a congregation of ordinary believers who have experienced all kinds of difficulties during the week and yet gather together on Sunday and declare:

“God Is Good!” That’s a testimony to the world.

3. Joy Deepens When We Remember Whose We Are Psalm 100:3

“Acknowledge that the LORD is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.”

Here we reach one of the great foundations of joy. **“We Are His.”**

Think about the meaning of those three words. **We are His.** We’re part of the family of God.

My deepest identity isn’t what I have achieved. It isn’t what I possess.

It isn’t even what other people think about me. **I Belong to God.**

And for the Christian, the New Testament takes this even further. **Paul says:**

“You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price.” 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 NLT

What was the price? The blood of Jesus Christ.

At the cross Jesus said, in effect:

“You are worth coming for.” “You are worth dying for.” “I want you to belong to Me.”

That produces a joy the world cannot give.

We Are the Sheep of His Pasture - I Know Whose I Am

Psalm 100 gives us another wonderful picture: *“We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.”*

That immediately takes us to Psalm 23: *“The LORD is my shepherd.”*

If I am one of His sheep, then I have a Shepherd. When I don’t know where to go—**He leads me.**

When I am exhausted—**He restores me.** When I am afraid—**He stays with me.**

When I walk through the valley—**He does not abandon me.**

When enemies surround me—**He prepares a table.**

When life ends—**I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

No wonder there is joy! I Know Whose I Am.

4. Jesus Gives Us a Joy That Reaches the Innermost Heart

Here I think we reach the heart of Christian joy.

Jesus spoke about joy repeatedly with His disciples.

On the very night before the cross, he said: John 15:11 NLT

“I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!”

Notice something marvelous. Jesus calls it: **“My Joy.”**

Not manufactured joy. Not borrowed joy. Not temporary joy. **His joy.**

And He says: *“Your joy will overflow!”*

Jesus Puts Joy Within Us

The world usually works from the **outside** in.

If everything around me is going well, I feel happy inside.

Jesus Works From the Inside Out.

He places something within the believer that the most adverse circumstances cannot explain.

Peace in the middle of a storm. Hope in the middle of uncertainty. Strength in the middle of weakness.

And joy even in the middle of sorrow.

This is why Peter could write: 1 Peter 1:8 NLT

“Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy.”

The King James Version puts it beautifully: **“Joy Unspeakable and Full of Glory.”**

Have you ever experienced that? A time when you couldn’t quite explain it.

A time when your circumstances weren’t perfect. A time when your problems hadn’t all disappeared.

Your questions hadn’t all been answered. **But somewhere deep inside there was this assurance:**

Jesus is with me. Jesus loves me. Jesus has saved me.

Jesus is holding me and Jesus will bring me home.

And suddenly there is joy. Not necessarily loud joy. Sometimes it's a quiet joy.

Sometimes it comes through tears. Sometimes it's simply that deep assurance that wells up within us:

"It Is Well with My Soul." That is joy the world cannot manufacture.

5. Joy Overflows into Thanksgiving Psalm 100:4

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name."

Now the joy of the Psalm begins to overflow. **Joy becomes thanksgiving.**

Thankful People See Life Differently

Gratitude changes our perspective.

The grateful heart asks: **"What has God already given me?"**

We can become so accustomed to God's blessings that we stop seeing them as blessings.

We wake up. We breathe. We have food. We have people who love us. We have a church family.

We have a Bible. We have access to God in prayer. We have forgiveness. We have salvation.

We have eternal life. We have Jesus.

Sometimes we need to stop asking God for the next blessing long enough to thank Him for the blessings already surrounding us.

Thanksgiving Is a Choice

Psalm 100 says: *"Give thanks to him."*

There are days when thanksgiving flows easily.

There are other days when thanksgiving becomes an act of faith. **For example.**

"Lord, I don't understand what is happening, but I thank You that You are with me."

"Lord, I don't know what tomorrow holds, but I thank You that You are already there."

"Lord, I don't have every answer, but I thank You that I know the One who does."

Sometimes thanksgiving is one of the strongest expressions of faith we can make.

6. Joy Rests on Three Unchanging Truths

Now Psalm 100 tells us why all this joy is possible. Verse 5:

“For the LORD is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.”

There are three magnificent truths here.

1. The Lord Is Good

Not: God is good when life is good.

Not: God is good when prayers are answered exactly as we wanted.

Simply: **“The Lord Is Good.”**

There may be things God permits that we don’t understand.

There may be prayers whose answers confuse us.

There may be roads He asks us to travel that we would never have chosen.

But even when we cannot understand the road;

2. We Can Trust the Character of The One Leading Me.

The Lord is good. His Love Never Ends *“His unfailing love continues forever.”*

Human love sometimes disappoints us. People change. Relationships change.

But God’s covenant love does not have an expiry date.

There was never a morning when God stopped loving us.

There was never a night when His love ran out.

There was never a failure that surprised Him.

And there will never come a day when the child of God discovers:

“God doesn’t love me anymore.”

At Calvary, God settled that question forever. Romans 5:8 NLT

“God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”

Want To Know Whether God Loves You? Look At the Cross.

3. “His faithfulness continues to each generation.”

That means the God who carried generations before us—**will carry us.**

And should the Lord tarry, He will be faithful to the generations that follow us.

People come and go. Generations rise and pass away. But: **God Remains Faithful.**

Conclusion — Let the Joy Out!

Maybe some of us need Psalm 100 today because somewhere along the road **we have allowed circumstances to steal our song.**

We still believe. We still attend church. We still pray.

Perhaps the joy has faded. Maybe disappointment has dimmed it.

Maybe grief has quietened it. Maybe worry has smothered it.

Maybe familiarity has caused us to take God's blessings for granted.

Then Psalm 100 says: **Look up again.**

Remember who God is. Remember whose you are. Remember what Jesus has done.

Remember the cross. Remember the empty tomb. Remember your sins are forgiven.

Remember that your name is written in heaven.

Remember that nothing can separate you from the love of God.

Remember that this life is not the end. Remember that Jesus is coming again.

And remember:

The Lord is good. His love lasts forever. His faithfulness continues through every generation.

What an incredible reason for joy!

Not shallow joy. Not artificial joy. Not a joy dependent upon perfect circumstances.

But a joy planted deep within the soul by Jesus Christ.

A joy that can sing in the sunshine. A joy that can survive the storm.

A joy that can shine through tears.

A joy that can stand beside a grave and still whisper, **"Because He lives, I too shall live."**

A joy that can face an uncertain tomorrow because it knows the One who holds tomorrow.

Peter called it: **"Joy Unspeakable and Full of Glory!"**

Jesus called it: "My Joy."

And Psalm 100 says: **Let It Out!**

"Shout with joy to the LORD!" "Worship the LORD with gladness!"

“Come before him, singing with joy!” “Enter his gates with thanksgiving!” “Give thanks to him and praise his name!”

Why? Because:

The Lord Is Good!

His Love Never Fails!

His Faithfulness Never Ends!

Your circumstances may change. Your strength may change. Your surroundings may change.

People around you may change. But Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

So lift your head. Lift your heart. Lift your voice.

Let the joy of Jesus rise within you.

Because when you truly know Him—when you know that you are forgiven,
when you know that you belong to Him, when you know that He walks beside you,
when you know that He will never leave you,
and when you know that one day you will see Him face to face,

There is a joy that this world did not give you, and this world cannot take away.

Joy That Cannot Be Contained!