

Reorientation –

**Tell Story:** Last semester of college – Costa Rica – brother came, rainy season.

Never ask the tour company if the conditions are OK.

Raging River. Flip the raft. I'm underwater and upside down.

Grasp on the back of my lifejacket and pull me into the boat.

Raft guide from another company pulled me into his boat and led me to safety.

**When we are in need of re-orienting, the Scriptures can do that for us. The Psalms can do that for us!**

For so many of us, the hymns do it as well –

They say it better than we could – they remind of theology, they point us to something greater.

For Israelites – Psalm 100 was one of those for them.

Hymns – we love them!

FB poll on my page – as of 7:40 this morning,

106 comments – overwhelming majority favorite?

It is Well

How Great Thou Art

Be Thou My Vision

Nanette J – “Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us! This was sung at my parents wedding and at ours - 34 years ago tomorrow! (TODAY)”

These songs have a way of rooting us in what really matters – they stir our memory.

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Psalm 100 would have certainly been that for the Israelite people. It is a 'grab you by the back of the lifejacket and get you back in the boat' kind of Psalm if you let it be.

In fact – let's read it:

1 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

2 Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.

3 Know that the LORD is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his<sup>al</sup>;  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.

Full of imperatives – invitations. (how many?)

But also, what makes it so beloved and beautiful, I would wager – is not just the imperatives but the deep theological truths that back it up. Psalm 100 provides REASON.

Some people are wired that way –

“Why?” “So what” –

12 years of college ministry – they love to ask why...

They're In luck: Psalm 100 provides at least 3 re-orienting truths that bring us back to reality and stir our memory of who we want to be. Let's take a look.

FIRST off – in Vs 3 – KNOW – that **the LORD is God**.

a. YHWH is Elohim.

YHWH – the proper name of the God of Israel.

Elohim – god or GOD.

So what am I trying to say? I'm saying that of all the gods (little G) of the Ancient Near East, the psalmist is issuing the proclamation that YHWH is THE God. Up to this point in Israel's history they have faced the gods of neighboring lands – The Canaanites, the Egyptians, the Babylonians the prophets of Ba'al, etc etc. So when the Psalmist starts Psalm 100 with an invitation to shout for joy ALL THE EARTH and exhorting us to "know that YHWH is God", he is essentially nullifying the Lordship of any of the other gods – he is saying 'these have no place here! – not in our temple! YHWH is God.

In the Israelites gathering and reciting these truths, they are re-orienting themselves to the reality that other gods have no place in this worship – they are reminding themselves of the Lordship and supremacy of YHWH as God.

And yall, for better or for worse – is that not what we still do today?

We live in a world with so many competing gods. So many competing allegiances. We're bombarded with temptations to bow to lesser idols. We're drowning in opportunities to forsake our highest commitments.

I wonder what is competing for Lordship in your life today? What is trying to rule you?

Is it your bank account? Is it your social standing / the opinion of others? Is it your negative thought patterns that rule the day? So many things compete for the throne of our lives.

But when we show up to God, and we proclaim the Yahweh is the God, we by default legitimize any other hold on our lives. We re-enlist in the fellowship of the redeemed who proclaim – as we do every time we baptize someone – that JESUS IS LORD – and by default, nothing else can be.

[Travis Sims, prom date – exclusivity]

Walter Brueggeman (renowned Old Testament scholar) says it best – he often says it best – when he says it like this in his commentary on Psalm 100:

**“To praise is to reject alternate loyalties and false definitions of reality. Praise is relentlessly polemic. As this God is affirmed, in the same act other gods are dismissed as irrelevant and denied any legitimacy. As Israel acknowledges to whom it belongs, it also asserts to whom it does not belong.” – Walter Brueggemann**

When we declare YHWH is Lord, we align our life under his lordship and simultaneously deny the Lordship of all other claims!

And, as the whole of the scriptures promise – we are free to live and move and have our being in the rightly ordered life of the true God as king!

SECOND -

The second truth revealed in this Psalm is this reminder in also in verse 3 –

“it is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.”

In the Hebrew this claim is even more glaring, although a little choppy:

**He has made us and not we.**

This line rejects any notion of self-making.

Scholars point out that this phrasing “it is he who made us” – has a bit of a double meaning. It certainly hints at creation – indeed it is God who made each of us.

But even more present for Israel is the reality that it is God who made them a nation. This is a reminder of their covenantal identity as God’s chosen people.

They couldn’t have crafted that if they tried – it is God who made them, not themselves!

In this day and age, here in the age of rugged individualism and “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” self-made men and women, Psalm 100 looks at us and rejects that assertion altogether.

For some this may be difficult to hear – you feel like you did indeed create your life out of nothing. I realize that is uncomfortable. But the scriptures are here to tell us that there is only one who created life out of nothing and it is the one God YHWH.

The truth of the Scriptures is that the rightly ordered life, just as it has to reject the claims of false gods upon it’s life, it must also reject the claims of self-making and self-dependence as a whole!

I went to college at Stephen F Austin State University – and my last 2 years I lived with my closest friend at SFA, Shauna. Shauna was only one year older than me but graduated early and was doing her Masters degree during my last 2 years of undergrad. She was always that way – put together, appropriately independent, self-started. I did and still do admire so much about her and our time together.

Shauna lives in Houston now with her husband and works as a school psychologist.

Anyway – I was the opposite – very...collegiate. I have to remind myself when I get frustrated with college students about where I started and where I was at their age.

So I was just learning to cook on my own and someone had told me you could put a whole chicken in the crock pot and let it cook all day. So I did that before I left for school – I got a whole frozen chicken and just stuck it in the crockpot. And when I got home at the end of the day I had this amazing looking crock pot chicken – it was perfectly cooked, the skin was crispy, it was well flavored – and shauna and I had it for dinner. Look what I had done – self-taught home cook Katy for the win!

I don't know how much time passed – but it was at least a few days – and Shauna fessed up to me that she had come home earlier in the day and saw my chicken totally raw in the crock pot, so she took it into her own hands – took the chicken out of the pot, put it on a pan, and baked the chicken in the oven for me then put it back in the crock pot so I wouldn't know until I got home.



Self-made homecook Katy was not as self-made as she thought. And in fact, the longer I live, the more I realize not much I do is self-made. Not much I do is earned – it is all a gift.

Arnold Schwarzenegger has spoken about this idea several times in his life. He says people come up to him all the time and ask how he did it – how did he become a self-made man?? And here is his answer:

*“I am not a self-made man. I got a lot of help.”*

*It is true that I grew up in Austria without plumbing. It is true that I moved to America alone with just a gym bag. And it is true that I worked as a bricklayer and invested in real estate to become a millionaire before I ever swung the sword in Conan the Barbarian.*

*But it is not true that I am self-made. Like everyone, to get to where I am, I stood on the shoulders of giants. My life was built on a foundation of parents, coaches, and teachers; of kind souls who lent couches or gym back rooms where I could sleep; of mentors who shared wisdom and advice; of idols who motivated me from the pages of magazines.”*

And it's true that none of us are as self-made as we would like to think we are.

But, even Arnold and I fall short of what the Psalmist is trying to orient us toward – it is not only that we can't do it on our own without people – it is that we can't do it on our own PERIOD. It is not just community and “the shoulders of giants” that help us – although that is beautiful and certainly a part of life together. But for today, for this Psalm – for the Israelites – it is GOD who makes the man.

Jesus lays it out to his new followers in the Sermon on the Mount – it is God who provides, it is God who equips, it is God who makes a way when we are hopeless. It is God who clothes the flowers and the birds and how much more will he do so for us? To proclaim anything differently would be short-sighted and dangerous. As Brueggeman says “it is gift. Not achievement!”

Brennan Manning says it like this in his famous book the Ragamuffin Gospel:  
(screen)

“The deeper we grow in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the poorer we become - the more we realize that everything in life is a gift. The tenor of our lives becomes one of humble and joyful thanksgiving. Awareness of our poverty and ineptitude

causes us to rejoice in the gift of being called out of darkness into wondrous light and translated into the kingdom of God's beloved Son.” - Brennan Manning

For us, as First Baptist Arlington, this is our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. We could look back on all that we have accomplished, all the churches we've planted, all the people we've led to the Lord, and all the ministries we've sustained and we could even get to patting ourselves on the back.... We could look at it and think – we have really made something for ourselves. But the moment we really think this is our self-doing, and not God making us, we ought to close the doors. It is God who made us, not we, and we are the sheep of his pasture.

And in proclaiming this Psalm together, we re-orient ourselves back to the vital truth that it is all God's making.

### THIRD

And the final reorienting truth of Psalm 100 is this: the defining reality of our faith and the reason for our hope:

**His love endures forever.**

The last timeless truth we get from this psalm is found in the last verse:

The Lord is good and his love endures forever.

His faithfulness continues through all generations.

His love endures forever.

Our two truths leading to this were really pointing to the reality of God's *power* –

Yawheh is king and he is the one who made us! But this last and perhaps most important point is the reality of God's *character* –

Why do we come to this place today? Why do we enter his courts with thanksgiving and praise? Because God is, was, and will always be good, loving and faithful. It is who he is!

It has been God's character from the very beginning – and Israel knows it because it is part of their history. One of the most famous scenes of God's self-revelation of his unfailing love – his **hesed** is found in Exodus 34 – Moses asks to see God's glory and God hides him in the cleft of the rock.

Vs 6 and 7: And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin."

Fidelity and reliability. Trustworthiness and consistency. It's who God was to the Israelites in the desert – it's what they sing about in this Psalm.

And it's also the God we show up to worship today – fully revealed in Christ Jesus.

And if you ever wonder if this God of Moses is good, trustworthy, reliable – take a look in the gospels at Yawheh fully revealed in Jesus Christ. Is he compassionate?

Is he gracious? Is he slow to anger and abounding in love? On every page. Why?

Because it is who God is!

And even more - one day, we trust God will make all things right, restoring his Kingdom and banishing sin and death forever.

And then we'll join his everlasting love, and shout, worship, come before him, and praise his name for all generations.

Why? Because he is good, he is faithful, and his steadfast love endures forever.

Even when we forget it, even when we are not sure – the Psalm helps us to articulate into words that which grounds us back in the reality of God's truth when the winds of the world want to blow us away. This is the unfailing love of God. This is the truth of the Psalm that we can take into tomorrow with us. It's what the Israelites did, and it's what we can do today.

Before we go – let’s read this Psalm together as we close – and let it remind and re-orient ourselves to the great truth of God’s lordship, God’s craftsmanship, and God’s steadfast love that endures forever.

Let’s recite this together:

1 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

2       Worship the LORD with gladness;  
          come before him with joyful songs.

3 Know that the LORD is God.

          It is he who made us, and we are his<sup>[a]</sup>;  
          we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
          and his courts with praise;  
          give thanks to him and praise his name.

5 For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
          his faithfulness continues through all generations.