

I. The Way vs 1-2, 6

Psalm 95:1-2 "1 Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! 2 Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! " "6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!"

- A. God is to be worshipped corporately. Corporate worship is the community of faith gathering in unity to worship our God. And we have the expectation that God gathers in our midst.

Hebrews 10:24-25 "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

- B. God is to be worshipped with joy

1. Joy is a delight created within us by the Holy Spirit. It is one of His gifts that He bestows upon His people – the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

2. Joy is not unbridled emotion. Christian joy is focused upon Christ and is harnessed by objective truth and holy reverence. It is a fervency based upon a delight in the Biblical Christ. It's being satisfied in Him. John Piper: "*Christian joy is a good feeling in the soul, produced by the Holy Spirit, as he causes us to see the beauty of Christ in the word and in his work.*"

3. The word for "joyful noise" literally means "let us shout for joy"

4. Kidner says "The full-throated cries urged in the verbs of verses 1 and 2 suggest an acclamation fit for a king who is the savior of his people"

- C. God is to be worshipped with thanksgiving

1. The Hebrew word for thanksgiving is "towdah" which can also mean "Praise" – You cannot praise Him without thanksgiving.

2. Thanksgiving humbles us and draws out of us acts of praise and worship
When the sinful woman sat weeping at the feet of Jesus she forgot herself as she poured the perfume on His feet wiping it with her hair Jesus was pleased with her act of love and gratitude

Luke 7:47 "Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little."

3. In the Psalms we continually see worship joined with thanksgiving.

Psalm 100:4-5 "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations."

Psalm 92:1 "It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High;"

D. God is to be worshipped with reverence

V 6 "Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!"

1. This is an expression of absolute submission before God. It is the recognition of His perfect holiness. The common word for worship in scripture means to prostrate oneself.
2. God above all else is holy

Matthew 6:9 "Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."

3. God is to be known to all the world as a holy God. As His people we must demonstrate this in our worship.
4. In Scripture God reveals Himself as a gracious loving God to those who love Him and keep His commandments but a consuming fire to those who refuse to submit to Him.

Deuteronomy 4:23-24 "Take care, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything that the LORD your God has forbidden you. For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God."

Hebrews 12:28-29 "Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire."

II. The Why v3-5

Psalm 95:3-7 "For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. "

A. Because of His greatness

1. We have here the fullness of the Divine being. Nothing is to compare with God. Everything else eclipses in His presence.
2. He is:
 - a) LORD or Yahweh, the Great I Am. The word LORD, capitalized, refers to Yahweh, the self-existent, covenant-keeping, redemptive God.
 - b) A great God and a great King above all gods. He is all surpassing. He is not like the dead and impotent idols.
3. He has dominion over all things, depths of the earth, heights of the mountains..

Hebrews 1:3 "...he upholds the universe by the word of his power."

B. Because He is our Creator

1. He created all things, He owns all things, He rules all things He is worthy that all of creation worship Him

Psalm 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork."

2. As Creator God has the right to expect His creation to bow before Him. The First Commandment is an expression of God's solitary reign: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

C. Because we are His covenant people

Jeremiah 30:22 "And you shall be my people, and I will be your God."

1. All of creation has the duty to worship God, but His people have a particular duty to worship Him. We have an intimate relationship with Him.
2. Being one of God's covenant people sets upon us a heightened responsibility to reflect His glory among the nations. There is an expectation that they will be holy.

2 Corinthians 6:17-18 "Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."

III. The warning

Psalm 95:7-11 "...Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work. For forty years I loathed that generation and said, "They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways." Therefore I swore in my wrath, "They shall not enter my rest."

A. A warning to those who confess Him only with their lips

1. The psalmist reminds them of the stubborn hearts of their forefathers in the wilderness. Because of their stubborn hypocrisy, claiming to obey God but continually turning against Him, they did not enter into Canaan.
2. Isaiah also warned of such a people

Isaiah 29:13 "And the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men,"

B. The warning requires sensitive ears - "If you would hear His voice" - if the hearer pays attention God will take up residence in our hearts and give increased understanding and blessing, both in this age and in the age to come.

Mark 4:23-24 "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you."

C. The warning is heart-related: "Do not harden your hearts" In the Bible the heart refers to our total inner being – the mind, the emotions and the will.

Proverbs 4:23 "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life."

Mark 7:21-23 "For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

- D. This is not just a warning to the OT Israelites, it applies to us too. The author of Hebrews applies this OT passage to salvation through faith in Christ. The warning is the same. Those who worship God with their lips only will prove to be outsiders. The warning is for those who have heard the Gospel but have only responded to it externally.

1. Perseverance in following Christ is essential

Hebrews 3:6 "but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope."

Hebrews 3:12-13 "Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."

Hebrews 4:1 "Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it."

2. The Gospel must be received by faith but faith will always be accompanied by faithful obedience.

Hebrews 4:2 "For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened."

- E. The warning is time-sensitive: "Today"! – You may not have tomorrow.

Revelation 3:3 "Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you."

- F. The warning is given to us by "the rock of our salvation" – Jesus is the Rock of our salvation, a sure and eternal refuge, the foundation on which rests the hope of heaven.

Acts 4:11-12 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

1 Peter 2:6 "For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What should we do if we don't feel like worshipping God? Is it hypocritical to do it without feeling it?
2. It is possible to work up feelings apart from God. How can we have genuine feelings of adoration from the heart?

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