Praise to God: Why we should do it

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Preacher: Peter Adam

[0:00] But as I said, we're looking again this evening at Psalm 100, so perhaps you'd like to turn with me. If you don't have a Bible, you'll see there's some at the side, some at the back. Do go and pick one up, one of the visitors' Bibles, so you can follow along with us.

And then when Peter is preaching to us later, you'll be able to see exactly where he's getting his material from. But we're going to read again Psalm 100, which begins by telling us that this is a Psalm 4 giving thanks.
Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness. Come into his presence with singing. Know that the Lord, he is God. It's he who made us. And we are his. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture.
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. Amen.
[1:24] And may God bless to us his word. Gracious God, without your words we live in darkness.

But you said, let there be light, and there was light. Shine the truth of your word into our lives, our hearts.
That we may know you. And love you. And trust you. And praise you. In Jesus' name.
Amen. Well, Psalm 100. A short psalm. But packed full of God's goodness.
I want you to notice the structure of the psalm. It includes the what we should do. And why we should do it. What should we do?
[2:40] Verses 1, 2, and 2. Make a joyful noise to the Lord all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness.

Come into his presence with singing. Know that the Lord, he is God. It is he who made us. And we are his. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture.
Do you see that verses 1 and 2 tell us what we should be doing? And verse 3 gives us the reason for living a life of praise and thanks and singing and exaltation in God.
Because it is he who made us. And we are his people and the sheep of his pasture. Then again in verse 4, what should we do?
Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him. Bless his name. Why?
[3:43] Verse 5. For the Lord is good. His steadfast love endures forever. And his faithfulness to all generations.

We know what we should do according to this psalm. And we know why we should do it.
That is, we should praise and thank and worship and adore our God. Because he is God.
He made us. We are his. We are his people. The sheep of his pasture. And the Lord is good. His steadfast love endures forever. And his faithfulness to all generations.
Let me ask you if thanks and praise are often in your heart and mind and on your lips.
[4:46] We thank people for what they do. We praise them for who they are.

We thank God for what he has done. We praise him for who he is.
Just check your thought output and word output for the last week.
What percentage of your thoughts and words are thanks and praise? There are people whose lives are completely empty of thanks and praise.
They will not thank anyone. And they praise nothing because there is nothing worth praising. You were 1%?
[6:02] 5% of your words or thoughts? Thanks and praise? Any advance on 20%?

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25%? Do I see a hand in the back row? 30%? Surely someone will give me 45% over in the corner there.
That's wonderful. 50%? Wonderful. That's terrific. Any advance on 50? Do we see a 60? We see a 60. Any advance on 60?
65? Wow. This is atmospheric. I can't believe it. Anyone up to 70? 75%.
Three quarters of your thoughts and words are thanks and praise. Ah. Don't think we got there. What a pity.
[7:02] What a pity. Luther described the human condition as our human beings being curved in on ourselves.

Obsessed with ourselves. Feeding on ourselves. Regarding ourselves and our interests.
The absolute selfishness which our society tells us is right. You are the most important person in the world.
And everything you want you should have. And anyone who stops you getting what you want is your enemy. And is oppressing you.
And if you try hard you can achieve anything you want and get anything you want. That's what the world is saying to us. And every advertisement says you're missing something.
[8:19] You need this deodorant. It's not a personal comment by the way. You need this motor car.

You need this holiday. You need... You're lacking. There's something really missing. A reason to be grumpy. If you don't have this kitchen appliance.
This wig. I have been tempted by wigs I must say. But anyway. The message always is you're missing out.
So that just reinforces our being curved in on ourselves. Which is why we find it so hard to love others as ourselves.
Why we find it so hard to reward others. Because we want to reward ourselves. Why we find it so unnatural to care for the comfort of others.
[9:28] Because our default position is my comfort. My welfare. My happiness. My desires. My wishes. My hopes.

Harriet and Toby are waiting for Christmas Day. when Grandma will arrive with some presents. Grandma arrives with the presents.
Harriet and Toby are very excited. In fact they have snuck to the Christmas tree. To feel the package. To see if they can find out what's inside.
But Grandma's a canny old girl. And she's put the present in a box. So you can't feel what it is. But then the wonderful moment comes when Harriet and Toby can rip the present open.
And find that Grandma has given them exactly what they want. And they are immediately obsessed. Of course. With the present. And so.
[10:43] Mom or Dad has to say. Don't forget to thank Grandma. Dear. So they look up and say. Thank you Grandma. And back to the present. Now these are the kind of lessons.

Actually grown-ups need to learn as well. You see. Every time we take something for granted. A gift of creation. Some fresh water.
Some air to breathe. Food. Human company. A bed. A blanket.
We don't need a blanket at the moment. But you know what I mean. Every time we take something for granted. Which is in fact. A gift of our great creator God.
Then we've missed an opportunity. To say to God. Thank you. And praise you. It's true of teenagers living at home.
[11:47] Isn't it? Every meal eaten. Every meal taken for granted. Is a missed opportunity. What a tragedy. To say.

Thank you. For this delicious. Food. I love going to funerals.
It's one of my. Retirement. Hobbies. Is going to funerals. And I love going to funerals. Because I have someone to thank. For the life of this person.
Thank you God. For your glory. In your creation. Of this person. And thank you God. For the good things.
This person did. And thank you. That you forgave their sins. And thank you. For all they contributed to others. Thank and praise you God. but Harriet and Toby eventually have to learn those hard adult lessons not just to say thank you to grandma not just to realize that actually the present doesn't matter what matters is grandma's love and care the lesson that actually the gift is not the

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most important thing it's the giver who is the one who is the most important isn't that right? [13:26] do you remember presents you got when you were little? no you don't do you remember people who gave you presents? yes you do do you thank God for them? yes you do yes it's the person who gives it's God the giver who is even more precious well massively more precious than the gifts he gives us but Harriet and Toby also have to learn don't they that they might not get what they wanted as we have to learn we may not get what we want from God and yet it may take a while but we can still thank and praise God for the life he has shaped for us and Harriet and Toby may learn that they have to share the present and that's a lesson we adults have to learn as well isn't it?

we can't hug God's gifts to ourselves we have to be willing to share them with others so once again God is dislocating our self-obsession to open our eyes to the needs of others and ways of loving others not just when they demand it but when we want to when we want to share what we have see a life opened up by God towards God and towards others is a more beautiful life than a life which is self-obsessed and Toby and Harriet may have to learn the lesson of Job the Lord gives and the Lord takes away blessed be the name of the Lord that is we must not treasure the gifts of God more than we treasure
God to treasure the gifts of God more than God is to engage in idolatry which is the worship of the creation not of God so I want you to see that this psalm is more challenging than you might think because it calls us not just to sing loudly on Sundays but to live a life full of praise and for praise and thanks to God be not only in every part of our lives but frequently on our lips make a joyful noise to the Lord all the earth serve the Lord with gladness come into his presence with singing enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise give thanks to him bless his holy name verses 3 and 5 tell us to know God and tell us who God is know that the Lord he is God what has God done in the past it is he who made us and we are his that might mean he created us which is true it might in the psalm mean he made us as his people
I have made you a people a nation a holy nation it is he who made us and so we belong to him we are his people that matches the first the previous words really well and how are we characterized we are his people and the sheep of his pasture now I have never been a sheep but I am sure that if I were a sheep I would like a generous pasture to feed in rather than a parched pasture in Australia we have lots of land and lots of sunshine and sometimes too much sunshine and all the grass dies and then we are in a crisis because we run out of feed for cattle and for sheep and so there is a mammoth exercise of transporting what do you call the stuff feed that is right from one side to the other because one side has floods there is lots of feed there and then you have to take it to the bit that's having a drought
Australia is a big country I remember a friend of mine was staying with me and we had bushfires in one part of Australia and floods in the other and his mother wrote to him and said why don't the floods put out the bushfires the answer is it's a big country and they can't get there but the experience of God's people is that we are his people and the sheep of his pasture that is his constant provision for everything we have you can thank God for any gift you have it all comes from him all we have comes from you of your own have we given you there's nothing you have that is not a gift of God a friend of mine contacted me a couple of years ago and she said she's not a Christian but she said a friend of mine is in hospital she's about to die and she wants to see an [20:01] Anglican minister I would have thought if you were about to die an Anglican minister may not be on your wish list of things to see but anyway I was happy to she had never lived as a Christian didn't know what Christianity was but she had led a wonderful life it was a very full life she'd campaigned to save possums and to stop freeways and she'd been largely successful so she'd had a happy life and then she said what's about to happen to me I said you're about to die and meet God she said what is God like so I said well you've told me about your wonderful life and actually everything that good that you have experienced was a personal gift of

God to you it was a new idea to her I hope it's not a new idea to you everything you have is a personal gift of God and then I went on to talk to say after she grasped that that's not all he's given you and went on to talk about the gift of his son and she became a Christian you see if we will but open our eyes to reality which means of course to open our eyes to the reality of God then we will see our lives in right perspective we will see ourselves in right perspective we will finally understand who we are the verse 3 says know that the Lord he is God our society says know yourself understand the human condition understand why nations function the way they do understand why

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we like these colors rather than those colors understand ourselves and how our body functions and understand how our emotions are shaped by our experiences understand ourselves and we live in a world which is which is either concerned with understanding ourselves or finding alien life somewhere else so we can understand that life it's a bizarre combination isn't it but actually we can only understand ourselves if we understand
God that is we can only know ourselves if we know God for he is our creator he is our moment by moment sustainer he preserves us in life moment by moment he's the one who saved us by the blood of his son from our sins and his wrath and judgment he is the one who is transforming us from one degree of glory to another into the image of his beloved son he is the one whose spirit dwells within us he is the one who knows what our future will be what the new creation will be like what it will be like to have a resurrected body he's the one who knows what is really important for us he's the one who knows how to grow us to maturity in Christ he is the one who knows how to apprise our lives and our hearts and our thinking and our lips open that we might praise him which is our final destiny it's what we're made for
I wonder what's your favourite verse in the letter to the Romans we have peace with God chapter 5 verse 1 perhaps as far you got as far as chapter 8 there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus wonderful perhaps you got to the end of chapter 8 nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus but if you work on your way through Romans you'll find these words I hope I can find them for from him that is from God and through him that is through
God and to him are all things to him be the glory forever that's a big vision of reality isn't it a big vision of the universe a big vision of your life from him and through him and to him are all things Romans 11 36 or you might even get to the last few verses of Paul's letter to the Romans now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophets prophetic writings has been made to all nations according to the command of the eternal God to bring about the obedience of faith to the only wise God be glory forever through
[25:59] Jesus Christ what is the gospel for salvation yes what is the gospel for the glory of God what is your life on earth for your salvation yes but your life is also for the glory of God why has God made you the person you are so that you might enjoy human life on earth yes so that having become a believer you might contribute generously to the body of Christ as part of God's people yes so that you might know God yes so that you might be forgiven yes so that you might have eternal life yes but there's more

God made you for his glory know that the Lord he is God it is he who made us and we are his we are his people and the sheep of his pasture when Jesus is about to die on the cross he prays a prayer for his disciples and it's a prayer in which he prays for his disciples and also for us who believe in him through the words of the disciples that they have received from God father I desire that they also whom you have given me may be with me where
I am to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world are you looking forward to seeing the glory of the Lord Jesus if not why not are you not looking forward to something more well people ask me all the time will my cat be with me in heaven it's a vital question you see as if you would need a cat for company in heaven when you are actually there to adore the maker of all cats the maker of everything the savior of the world you see our aims our emotions our desires our imagination is far too small and what this psalm is trying what
God is trying to do through this psalm is to open our minds to a bigger reality a reality in which we know that the Lord he is God and so we do make a joyful noise to the Lord serve the Lord with gladness come into his presence with singing enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise give thanks to him bless his name Paul tells the Colossians to abound in thanksgiving to be the kind of people who just can't stop thanking God and your life could be that rich too verse five for the
Lord is good his steadfast love endures forever and his faithfulness through all generations let's think about the goodness of God goodness goodness is not highly valued in our society is it if you apply for a job you won't be asked if you're good and as the French writer sorry the name's gone anyway whatever her name was she pointed out that in fiction evil is interesting and good is boring whereas in real life evil is boring and good is wonderful imagine a world without human goodness what would our daily lives be like without human goodness flawed as it is and then imagine if

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[31:41] God was not good the Lord is good and what does that mean verse 5 explains it the Lord is good his steadfast love endures forever and his faithfulness for all generations do you remember in in in Exodus Moses asked God show me your glory and God's reply is I'll make all my goodness my goodness pass before you and proclaim my name the Lord and it is you see because God is good that he gives us good gifts Psalm 145 they pour forth and fame of your abundant goodness oh give thanks to the Lord for he is good

Psalm 106 his steadfast love endures forever or Psalm 109 because your steadfast love is good deliver me or Psalm 86 show me a sign of your goodness so the Bible is God teaches in the Bible that the goodness of God is so precious it means his constant love and care it means his desire for our welfare and our growth and our maturity in Christ if God were bad rather than good we would be in trouble so no wonder the psalm says for the Lord is good his steadfast love endures forever his faithfulness throughout all generations and Psalm 23 includes the marvelous words surely your goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life that is
God's goodness and mercy pursues us all through our lives and I often think it's good to ask God to open our eyes to see signs of his goodness to open our eyes to see his gifts every day so that we grow in thankfulness no wonder when Jesus comes we see the goodness of God personified in person Titus 3 when the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared he saved us for the Lord is good his steadfast love endures forever his faithfulness to all generations is the thanks and praise for
God part of your life you might say well I thank and praise God by the way I live well that would be really good but to have our lives praising God but not our lips is sterile or to have the praise of God on our lips but not in our lives is stale but remember that the psalm not only wants us to praise it is a call to all the world to make a joyful noise to the
Lord all the earth so we sang this morning the wonderful hymn fill thou my life O Lord my God in every part with praise that my whole being may proclaim thy being and thy ways that would be wonderful wouldn't it if your life was full of praise but the desire of the psalm is far more than our individual lives be full of praise we might expand that as fill your church with praise that would be wonderful wouldn't it fill Scotland with your praise no the psalm is more ambitious!
[36:35] than that fill the earth fill the world fill the universe with your praise and the universe is too small to contain the praise and glory of God what is it like to praise God we can see a faint echo of the experience of praising God when we think of the moments of the glorious moments of our lives I remember being in Perth which is in Western Australia I was there to preach at a church I went for an early morning walk and on the way home back to where I was staying I saw a tiny flower which had fallen on the ground from the bush so I felt I could pick it up because I wasn't destroying somebody's garden it was pure white vivid white with a beautiful yellow streak in the middle it was just tiny and I picked it up and I thought this flower is so beautiful but it's actually it'll be dead by tomorrow but as it is now it is a faint of the faintest glimpse of the wonderful glory of a transformed creation when the

Lord Jesus returns and the faintest faintest faintest glimpse of the glory of God years ago I went to see a waterfall in Yorkshire it's not a very big waterfall but I happened to get there at dusk which is a magical sorry a wonderful moment isn't it and there was no one else there which is my ideal way of relating to a waterfall turned the corner around the rock and there was this small but beautiful waterfall I just love the contrast between the kind of solidity and firmness of the rock and then the beauty of the shining water falling down and you know when you see something like that you think it's beauty it's majesty it's glory it's magnificence it's wonder it's bigger than I am it's beyond me it transcends my daily life and experience this is an extraordinary experience and in a way it's hard to respond to the beauty the sheer beauty of this waterfall which is why people tend to carve their initials of the rock because that's a way of saying
I was here that's a very inadequate response but that is a response isn't it and and yet although I felt very small against over against the beauty of the waterfall I also felt enriched by it I wasn't defeated by it and the waterfall of course is something which is impersonal but when we see God that will be a vision glorious and splendid and magnificent and yet we'll know that this glorious and mighty God this majestic God this splendid God this beautiful God is the God who made us and loves us and sent his son to be our saviour and we won't feel small because we know that this God made us in his image to be!

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his representatives to be like him to serve him with dignity oh a flawed dignity in this life but by then transformed into the likeness of his son so we can stand before him without fear and just praise him are you getting ready for that that is your future dear sister in Christ dear brother in Christ that is your future no that is our future but the psalm doesn't God in this psalm doesn't want us to be satisfied with thinking about our future he wants us to have a passion that all the earth may make a joyful noise to the Lord of the 8 billion people alive today in the world 3 billion have no access to a Bible or a
Christian or a church 3 billion people in the world today have no personal access to a Christian a Bible or a church how could you sing make a joyful noise to the Lord all the earth without an awareness of that tragedy sadness and we shouldn't be satisfied that God fills our lives with his glory or fills our churches with his glory do you notice how often churches are concerned about how to praise God in the right way I understand that in Scotland there's been some discussion about that over the years what is the right way to praise
[43:14] God with an organ a kiss of whistles or unaccompanied and can you sing the psalms or are you allowed to sing these modern hymns as well and I can't I'm not putting you down I went to a Baptist church and it was described as a gospel music service so I thought that would be good I went along and we sang Billy Graham songs and the Bible wasn't opened the gospel wasn't preached and I thought this is sick this is self-indulgent praising of God ourselves and forgetting those who don't know God but Anglicans we can't poke fingers at anybody else because we specialise in large buildings with no people and a lovely choir they're called cathedrals so may

God give you a passion to fill your life with the praise of God and may God give you a passion to fill this church with the praise of God and may God give you a passion to fill Scotland with the praise of God and the praise of his son and may God give you a passion to see the gospel of Jesus Christ go throughout this world Scotland gave so many wonderful missionaries in the 19th century I've got whole bookcases of biographies of missionaries from Scotland who went all over the world even to Australia to take the gospel of the Lord Jesus may God in his mercy raise up from Scotland in these years missionaries for Scotland and missionaries for the whole world that all the earth may make a joyful noise to the
Lord what a great prayer for you to pray every day may Scotland help work towards all the earth making a joyful noise to the Lord we're going to pray in response to the psalm and the prayer will come on the screen and we'll stand and pray this prayer together gracious and everlasting God we join now with believers all around the world to make a joyful noise to you serving you with our gladness and coming into your presence with singing for we know that you are our Lord
God that you made us and we are yours your sheep in your pasture through Christ our Saviour we enter your presence with thanks and praise and bless your holy name for you are good your love endures forever your faithfulness for all generations Lord Jesus Christ we thank and praise you our great shepherd for you laid down your life for us making peace by the blood of your cross and all authority in heaven and earth is yours bring many people from your world to listen to your voice and follow you we praise you because one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that you are Lord to the glory of God our Father Amen Amen Thank you.

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