

“A Call to Worship”
Psalm 95
(Preached at Trinity, February 5, 2012)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we begin **Psalm 95** our hearts are stirred to praise. This is a psalm of worship.
Psalm 95:1 KJV - "O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation."
2. Does that seem ordinary to you? Like something worn out? Has it grown old, dry? You don't sense anything like this with the psalmist. The Septuagint calls it a Psalm of David—it certainly has the tone of one of David's songs. One cannot read this psalm without being gripped by a sense of God's greatness. Nothing can compare with Him. He alone is worthy of all praise and worship. He alone is worthy of all commitment and allegiance.
3. The psalmist calls the congregation together for worship. Notice it is corporate worship:
Psalm 95:1-2 KJV - "O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. ² Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving"
4. There are three things we can see in this psalm.
 - I. First, we find the *WAY* God must be worshipped – **Verses 1-6**
 - II. Second, we find the *WHY* God must be worshipped – **Verses 3-7**
 - III. Third, we find the *WARNING* to all who would worship God - **Verses 7-11**
- I. The way God must be worshipped – **Verses 1-6**
 - A. God is to be worshipped with joy
Psalm 95:1 KJV - "let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation"
 1. The word for “joyful noise” literally means “let us shout for joy”
The second expression also mean to “shout for joy” like a battle cry.
 2. Worship is filled with singing – and singing must be expressions of joy
 3. More than all other people upon the face of the earth we have cause to sing forth with joy. Those filled with such joy cannot help but sing forth His praises.
 4. 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.
 5. 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. But we can grieve the Spirit, we can quench the Spirit. With sinful carelessness all joy can depart.
 - B. God is to be worshipped with thanksgiving
Psalm 95:2 KJV - "Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving"
 1. The Hebrew word for thanksgiving is תוֹדָה towdah which can also mean "Praise" – You *cannot* praise Him without thanksgiving.
Spurgeon – "A Sabbath without thanksgiving is a Sabbath profaned."

2. Thanksgiving humbles us and draws out of us acts of praise and worship
When Mary 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 – "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same loveth little.*"
3. In the Psalms we continually see worship joined with thanksgiving
Psalm 100:4-5 – "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name."⁵
For the LORD *is* good; his mercy *is* everlasting; and his truth *endureth* to all generations."
Psalm 92:1-2 – "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: ² To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,"
4. After the Ark was carried to Jerusalem David was filled with thanksgiving – it manifested itself in singing praises unto God.
1 Chronicles 16:7-12 – "Then on that day David delivered first *this psalm* to thank the LORD into the hand of Asaph and his brethren. ⁸ Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people. ⁹ Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works. ¹⁰ Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. ¹¹ Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually. ¹² Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;"
5. Upon the return from the Babylonian captivity they began to rebuild the Temple. After the foundation of the Temple was laid thanksgiving was mixed with praise and worship
Ezra 3:10-11 – "And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. ¹¹ And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because *he is* good, for his mercy *endureth* for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid."

C. Not only with *Joy* and *Thanksgiving* . . .

God is to be worshipped with *Reverence*

Psalm 95:2 KJV - " Let us come before his presence"

Psalm 95:6 KJV - "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker."

1. Both Hebrew words here mean "bow down." This is an expression of absolute submission before God. It is the recognition of His perfect holiness.

2. God above all else is holy
Matthew 6:9 KJV - "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."
 - a. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord and God killed them. Moses spoke these words to Aaron, their father.
Leviticus 10:3 KJV - " Then Moses said unto Aaron, This *is it* that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified."
 - b. The Septuagint uses the same word translated "hallowed" in the Lord's Prayer.
 - c. God is to be known to all the world as a holy God.
As His people we must demonstrate this in our worship
3. Spurgeon: "Everywhere God is present, but there is a peculiar presence of grace and glory into which men should never come without the profoundest reverence.
4. The church today needs to give careful attention to this. We too have a perilously low view of God. Many churches think they can bring almost any activity into their assembly and still call it worship. Our God must not be approached without a holy fear.
5. 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 heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, *or* the likeness of any *thing*, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee. ²⁴ For the LORD thy God *is* a consuming fire, *even* a jealous God."
Hebrews 12:28-29 – "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: ²⁹ For our God *is* a consuming fire."
6. In C.S. Lewis's series, "The Chronicles of Narnia" he has a character known as Aslan. A huge lion, he is supposed to be a figure of Christ. Despite his gentle and loving nature, he is powerful and can be dangerous. Of Aslan it is said, "He is not a tame lion."

II. The why God must be worshipped – **Verses 3-7**

A. Because of His greatness – **Verse 3**

Psalms 95:3 KJV - "For the LORD *is* a great God, and a great King above all gods."

1. We have here the fullness of the Divine being. Nothing is to compare with God. Everything else eclipses in His presence.

2. The psalmist uses three words to describe God in this verse:
 יהוה - Yahweh, the Great I Am.
 אל – short for אלהים - He is the one true God
 מֶלֶךְ melek – He is the King of kings. The psalmist adds He is the “King above all gods.” He is all surpassing.
3. To know Him results in everything else becoming less and less significant.
4. There’s an old spiritual that goes, “He’s got the whole world in his hands.” The psalmist repeats this:
Psalm 95:4 KJV - "In his hand *are* the deep places of the earth"
5. He adds:
Psalm 95:4 KJV - "the strength of the hills *is* his also."
 He has dominion over all things. He is worthy of worship

B. Because He is our Creator

Psalm 95:5 KJV - "The sea *is* his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry *land*."

Psalm 95:6 KJV - "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker."

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 KJV - "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."
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

Psalm 95:7 KJV - "For he *is* our God; and we *are* the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand."

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. The essence of corporate worship is the community of faith gathering in unity to worship their God. And they have the expectation that God gathers in their midst.
3. 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 KJV - "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, ¹⁸ And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

III. The warning to all who would worship God - **Verses 7-11**

- A. With this heightened responsibility comes a warning to those who confess Him only with their lips

1. Isaiah warned of such a people
Isaiah 29:13 KJV - "this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me"
 2. The psalmist reminds them of the stubborn hearts of their forefathers in the wilderness.
Psalms 95:8-9 KJV - "Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as *in* the day of temptation in the wilderness: ⁹ When your fathers tempted me"
 3. Because of their stubborn hypocrisy, claiming to obey God but continually turning against Him, they did not enter into Canaan.
Psalms 95:10-11 KJV - "Forty years long was I grieved with *this* generation, and said, It *is* a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: ¹¹ Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest."
- B. There is a NT application to this passage
1. The NT 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.
 2. Perseverance in following Christ is essential
Hebrews 3:6 KJV - "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."
Hebrews 3:12-13 KJV - "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
Hebrews 4:1 KJV - "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."
 3. The Gospel must be received by faith but faith will always be accompanied by faithful obedience.
Hebrews 4:2 KJV - "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*."

Conclusion:

1. **Psalms 95** is a psalm of worship. It describes how we should worship. It describes why we should worship. The people of God are a worshipping people.
2. But there there is a strict warning that many disregard. The people of God are those who follow hard after Christ. These are the true worshippers.
3. The warning goes out – and it is loud and clear:
Hebrews 3:12-13 KJV - "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

- A. It is a warning to each of us as individuals. Have you surrendered your life over entirely to Christ?
 - B. It is an encouragement for us to watch over one another exhorting each other to faithfulness.
4. If you are not one of the true worshippers of Christ there is still time. Where there is life there is hope.
- Hebrews 3:7-8 KJV** - "To day if ye will hear his voice, ⁸ Harden not your hearts"