

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost June 14, 2020**

### **Psalm 100**

Psalm 100 is one of the shorter psalms at just 5 verses. But those five verses capture the essence of our relationship with God.

It starts with a number of imperatives, commands; The author calls on all of us to shout joyfully to God, to serve God with gladness, to come before God with a song, with thanksgiving, and praise. To give thanks and bless God's name.

But why? Why should we do these things? What makes God worthy of the same kind of loud shouting we give to our favorite sports team or entertainer when they enter the arena? Why should we spend our time, effort, and energy to serve God? Why should we take time from our busy lives to come before God in worship and praise?

Psalm 100's response is because God is our maker, to whom we belong. The one who, as Genesis reminds us, created us in God's own image. Because we are God's people and God is our shepherd.

Now, while these are good enough, the kicker comes at the end. God is worthy of shouts, service, praise and thanksgiving because of God's steadfast love for us. A love that is immovable and everlasting. Because God is faithful to us, yes- even us sinners who are so often faithless towards God - and God's faithfulness is trustworthy because it has lasted across the ages.

God is worthy of these things, because of who God is- our maker, the one who knit us together, whose image we bear. And because of what God has done-

loved us and been faithful to us through the ages and despite our own rejection, denial, and avoidance of God.

We know this about God because of the experience of fellow believers and the witness of scripture- the story of God's continuing pursuit of God's creation. To restore a relationship that was damaged almost to breaking by our own sinfulness- especially the sin of thinking we could be God, that we didn't need God.

Parker enters this story today. For in these waters of baptism, he will be claimed as one of God's own. He will be welcomed with shouts of praise and thanksgiving into the presence of the God whose image he bears as surely as family see his mother or his father in his face.

His parents will promise to help him know that the Lord is God and nothing or no one else is. The term used for know in our psalm is not just an intellectual assent or understanding but a deep and intimate awareness- a bodily knowing God's identity- as the one who has created him. The one whose love for him happened even while he was a sinner. The one who has been faithful to all those whom God has claimed across the ages. A knowing that is embodied in a community of believers who respond together to this God with shouts of joy, with songs, and praise, and thanksgiving. A knowing embodied in a people who tell the old, old story of God's love as well as their own stories of God's steadfast love for them and their family. Their own stories of God's faithfulness, even while they were dead in sin.

Paul reminds us that even this restoration of relationship with God comes through God's own action- God's self-expression to us in Jesus Christ. For while we were

still sinners, Jesus Christ died so that we might be free. Free from sin, death, the devil and all the forces that defy God. Free, from the need to try and be god. Free, so that we might love others as God has loved us... without limit. So that we might proclaim the good news of God in Jesus Christ to a world that needs to hear that story of love unbounded, of trust-absolute, of faithfulness without end.

As we prepare for the baptism of Parker Kenneth Boyer- I invite us to remember our own baptism, to remember the steadfast love of God in our own lives. God's own unfailing faithfulness to us. I invite you to come by the church after this service closes until noon to receive a visible sign of that steadfast love and to hear again the truth of who you are. Beloved of God, claimed by God.

So that we might all better take up our cross and follow Jesus' call for us to go and proclaim the good news, to bring healing to the sick, release to those captive to the demons of addiction, abuse, of seeing others as less than themselves, and to comfort all in need.

Come, let us follow the God who has claimed us and who is worthy of thanks and praise.