

"The Importance of Attitude!"
by Rom A. Pegram (1/13/19)

Attitude is everything! And it's that 'attitude of gratitude' God's looking for in our relationship with him. Our scripture lesson for today lines up with that expectation perfectly, as we're invited to enter *joyfully* into God's presence... Listen carefully to the psalmist's word to us:

Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth! ²Worship the LORD with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy. ³Acknowledge that the LORD is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. ⁴Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. ⁵For the LORD is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation. – Psalm 100:1-5 (NLT)

Reflecting on **v. 3** to begin today, let me say this: God is our Creator; we did not create ourselves. Many people live as though they are the creator and center of their own little world. But, this mind-set leads to a greedy possessiveness and, if everything should be taken away, *all hope is lost!* But when we realize that God created us and gives us all we have, we'll not only be thankful, but we'll want to give to others just as God gave to us ([2Corinthians 9:8](#)). Then, if all is lost, we still have God and all that God gives us ... including hope! It's the attitude that comes out of a thankful heart that needs to accompany us to worship... BUT, just in case you didn't come into this time of worship with an especially grateful attitude (which is what God is seeking from us), let me see if I can help you out just a bit...

Why should we be thankful and/or grateful? Here are a few reasons:

- If you own just one Bible, you are abundantly blessed one-third of the world does not have access to even one...
- If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are more blessed than a million who will not survive the week...
- If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture or the pangs of starvation, you are ahead of five million people around the world...
- If you attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest or torture of death, you are more blessed than almost three billion people in the world...
- If you have food in your refrigerator, clothes on your back, roof over your head and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of this world...
- If you have money in the bank, in your wallet and spare change in a dish someplace, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy...
- If you can hold someone's hand, hug them or even touch them on the shoulder, you are blessed because you can offer God's healing touch...
- If you prayed yesterday and today, you are in the minority because you believe in God's willingness to hear and answer prayer...

- If you believe in Jesus as the Son of God, you are part of a very small minority in the world ... and spiritually rich indeed...

Today, folks, we need to learn to enter into our time of worship with a heart full of thanksgiving & gratitude! From our scripture lesson today, we need to learn to:

WORSHIP IN GOD'S PRESENCE! We are to begin our time of worship—coming into God's presence—*deliberately* and *enthusiastically*! Again verse 1 says: "Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth!" Are you serious about being here ... in this place? Do you come into this place with incredible enthusiasm? Are you ready to shout on behalf of your Lord and Savior for all that he has done in your life ... and in giving you life?

John Wesley once told his preachers, "Catch on fire with enthusiasm [for Christ] and people will come for miles to watch you burn." Can you imagine anyone sitting in the stands at a Badger football game, when the team runs out onto the field and they stay seated and respond with ... "Oh, boy. Don't those uniforms look marvelous...." That's not going to happen, is it? Folks, you cannot even hear yourself think at a Badger football game when the team runs out onto the field! The fans are so enthusiastic for *their team* ... that they just can't help themselves and they are yelling and they are jumping up & down ... and so forth. The Badgers have set themselves on fire—they're fired up, in other words—and they are getting those in the stands fired up, too!

What if we did that when worship started in our church? Yeah, I know, the neighbors may think we're crazy ... but God would be thrilled! According to the psalmist, this is the first step of learning to worship in God's presence—maybe not shouting to the top of your lungs ... but *deliberately* and *enthusiastically* ... because Jesus is the King of Kings on our team!

And, folks, GOD ALSO LOOKS UPON THE HEART (1 Sam. 16:7) during our times of worship! Did you know that? *Did you know that God is peering inside you right now?* So, be deliberate and enthusiastic when you worship. Then...

Behind our worship must be a proper *attitude*! Verse 2 says, "Worship the LORD with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy." So, are you happy to be here? For some of you, if you are, please let your face know, would you? And when you sing, are you overwhelmed with JOY in singing to the Lord? Our opening song of worship should always *set the tone* for our worship on that day... These are the things God expects as we gather together ... and I do not want God to be disappointed around here. Finally,

Verse 3 gives us the answer to *why* this type of worship:

- There is no other *God*! Verse 3a says, "Acknowledge that the LORD is God!"
- God is our *Creator*! Verse 3b reminds us, "He made us, and we are his."
- And ... beyond creation stands *redemption*! Verse 3c makes this clear when we see what Jesus did for us: "We are his people, the sheep of his pasture."

So, *we need to learn to worship in God's presence* ... realizing that HE IS HERE with us! And then, according to the psalmist, we need to learn to...

WORSHIP IN GOD'S PALACE! Here, we are to have an *attitude of gratitude!* Verse 4a instructs us in this way: "Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise." This is one of those places in scripture where God's word speaks for itself; there is no other attitude to come into worship with than an attitude of thanksgiving ... where we not only believe it, but we show it! Here, God is enthroned as King ... and we need to approach his throne with incredible respect...

Then, we are to *boast* and *bless!* Verse 4b says, "Give thanks to him and praise his name." This is where gratitude ... now turns to worship—the heart of what we're doing here. Folks, if you haven't figured it out already, the attitude that we're talking about here is totally an attitude of love ... for God and for others ... and IT'S GOOD FOR YOU!

Some years ago, Dr. Karl Menninger, noted doctor and psychologist, was seeking the cause of many of his patients' ills. One day he called in his clinical staff and proceeded to unfold a plan for developing, in his clinic, *an atmosphere of creative love*. All patients were to be given large quantities of love; no unloving attitudes were to be displayed in the presence of the patients, and all nurses and doctors were to go about their work in and out of the various rooms with a loving attitude. At the end of six months, the time spent by patients in the institution was cut in half...

People come to our place of worship with hurts and needs as well—some absolutely incredible! If we all came into worship—agreeing we would only give to others large quantities of LOVE (*no unloving attitudes allowed*), what do you think that would do for our church? What do you think that would do for our community? For our area of the state? Yet this is the attitude that the psalmist is calling us to today: *An attitude of love and gratitude*. And all that we'd be doing is following the lead of the One we come to worship! Take a look at v. 5 with me for more reasons *why* we do this:

Verse 5 gives us the answer to *why* this type of worship:

- God is full of *goodness*—God's moral character & benevolence...
- God is full of *mercy*—*God's covenant-love*, a love that is signed and sealed ... and will never run out—a promise fulfilled for us in Jesus...
- God is full of *truth*—God and his self-revelation [in Christ] can be counted on for all time—who God is to us ... and who we are in Him!

The worship described in Psalm 100 is the worship that truly blesses God ... and that's what we want to be about here in 2019...

You probably remember the story in Luke 17 of the 10 lepers that came to Jesus to be healed ... and only one returned to give thanks. That story of ungratefulness reminded me of another...

There's a beautiful legend or story of two angels that were sent forth throughout the land, each given a basket, one to gather up requests and the other thanksgivings. The angel of requests came back with his basket running over full. The angel of thanksgivings came back with his basket practically empty...

And so it is in life. It seems all have requests to make, but few of us think to return and give thanks... Again, Psalm 100 teaches us to do exactly the opposite...

- This psalm calls us to praise God...
- He is our God; He is our Creator...
- He is our Shepherd-King...
- He is good ... and keeps His covenant ... because he is trustworthy...

In an attitude of gratitude, and in actions of shouting and singing, we are to come to Him... This is the worship that pleases God; this is the worship that blesses God! And don't kid yourself into thinking you'd ever go home empty; for every time we bless God, as God has asked us to, we in turn are the ones who are blessed ... and that's the life that I deeply desire for all of us today... Are you with me?