

Old School Worship [Psalm 103]
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INTRODUCTION

1. I grew up going to church in an old building.
 - a. The Westminster Presbyterian Church was founded after the Civil War
 - b. When they sprawled out, they sold the church to Cincinnati Christian University
 - c. Some professors from there started a church in the very same building.
 - d. I grew up in an old church with wooden pews and stained glass windows.
2. This kind of faith is foreign to so many of us under a certain age.
 - a. From my recent trip to New England, the churches there have a historical feel
 - 1) That kind of religious gathering might feel peculiar to us.
 - 2) But there's something to be said about recognizing the history.
 - b. But in the end, ours is a faith that spans thousands of years
 - 1) The framework of our worship is old. And every once in awhile, we should dwell on it.
3. So tonight, we examine **Old School Worship**.
 - a. And we do so by singing together a song of ancient creativity: Psalm 103.

VERSES 1,2,20-22

¹ Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

² Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—

²⁰ Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.

²¹ Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.

²² Praise the LORD, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the LORD, my soul.

1. Psalm 103 is of the hymn of praise genre. And there are two distinct parts of these hymns
 - a. The first part is usually the bookends of the psalm: it's the CALL TO WORSHIP
 - b. This tradition was held in the church through generations: Calling people to worship.
 - c. The most common way that this was conducted was through church bells.
 - 1) The tradition dates back to Italy around the 5th century.
 - 2) Church bells also have some great local ties.
 - a) The Verdin Bell Co., since 1842, has been one of the nation's leading makers
 - b) And just nearby here, Big Joe in St Francis DeSales
 - 1] The largest swinging bell ever cast in the United States
 - 2] Seven feet tall and nine feet in diameter
 - 3] Rang in 1896, heard 15 miles away
 - d. Bells were such a tradition because it was a communal signal to worship.
 2. This call to worship speaks to all creation: beginning with my soul, ending with all creation
 - a. The lesson here is simple: all the universe is called into worship of the Lord God.
 3. In a service, a call to worship is directed to the congregation through a worship leader.
 - a. It's an act that brings the worshiping community into being.
 - 1) It is a call to focus mind, heart, and intention on the worship of God.
 - 2) It's brief and emotive, not lengthy and intellectual.
 4. And I guess the question that we should ask ourselves, then, is are you responding?
 - a. In general, the corporate worship service is not the priority it once was.
 - b. I'd say part of it is generational change—we're a less puritanical people than ever.
 - 1) And I'll say that we church leaders are just as culpable for how we sell worship.
 - 2) Obviously, worship should be relevant and not boring, but it should be focused.
 - c. We are here for Him, but we are here for we. You need to be here.
 - d. **Hebrews 10:24,25** "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

e. So this is where I'll challenge you in a light of a summer slump: make worship a priority.

VERSES 3-7

³ who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

⁴ who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,

⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

⁶ The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.

⁷ He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel:

1. The second part of a hymn of praise is the REASONS FOR WORSHIP
 - a. That's where we'll spend the rest of this Psalm. Why do we worship the Lord?
 - b. We get some pretty good reasons right here in this portion of the text.
 - 1) **FORGIVENESS**: The weight of guilt can crush, but God relieves it.
 - 2) **HEALING**: While this can be questioned, miraculous healing happens
 - 3) **SALVATION**: from the pit. Not hell, but landing of dead.
 - 4) **LOVE&MERCY**: We serve a God who cares about our wellbeing. Seen in . . .
 - 5) **SATISFACTION**: We find that in the Lord, our needs are fulfilled & we're invigorated
 - 6) **JUSTICE**: In the end, fairness will reign.
2. Verse 7 references how we have knowledge of all of these reasons.
 - a. "He made his way known to us," not making us guess about who he is.
 - 1) While we need to live within the mystery of God, acknowledge his revelation.
 - 2) We needn't live in fear of a Creator shrouded in the unknown.
 - b. Many of the reasons here are held by skeptics of Christianity.
 - 1) What they seem to forget: we know this about God because of the Scriptures
3. This is why we study the Scriptures in our worship gatherings
 - a. This might seem old school, but we focus on the word of God when we come together
 - b. It needs to be central to our worship together so we can discuss belief
 - 1) You'll hear some things you might disagree with, but you need to wrestle with it.

VERSES 8-13

⁸ The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

⁹ He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;

¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;

¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

¹³ As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;

1. Verse 8 is a quote from **Exodus 34:6,7**

"And [the Lord] passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin."

a. This was spoken by the Lord about the Lord. These words have impact.

2. Verse 10 tells us some of the greatest news you have ever heard.

a. We often ask: "Why did God let this happen?" But we never ask that about this verse

- 1) Because of our sins, we deserve repayment of the wrath of God.
- 2) But the Lord's grace is so great (east to west), we can't comprehend it.

3. When it comes to worship, this is precisely why we have communion together.

a. In my doctoral program, there were many different frequencies of communion
b. Why we do it weekly: it reminds of us of our sin and the price of it.

VERSES 14-19

¹⁴ for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

¹⁵ The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field;

¹⁶ the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.

¹⁷ But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children—

¹⁸ with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts.

¹⁹ The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.

1. Verses 14-16 repeats a theme that we've seen before in the Psalms: our mortality
 - a. Here, our time is likened to both dust and grass. They do not last.
2. Life is short but God is eternal

CONCLUSION

1. We worship an eternal God for only a period of time.
 - a. On earth, there is a limited time of worship of Him
 - b. I need to make the most of it.
2. This is why I need to make sure my worship of him doesn't become commonplace.
 - a. Sometimes a different approach will remind me of his reverence.
 - b. We try as a congregation to do this, but sometimes the auspice is on you.
 - c. So how can you find some perspective?
3. Hebrews 11 is the faith chapter, listing dozens of names of faithful servants of God.
 - a. Immediately following is the beginning of chapter 12.

Hebrews 12:1,2

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

4. In 1674, Thomas Ken wrote a hymn that lasted far beyond his life. It projects simplicity but contains a powerful message as well. And it summarizes well Psalm 103 and our worship this evening. Let's stand as we sing:

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*