

Worship the Lord

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 13 July 2011

Preacher: Jonathan Dirrim

[0:00] Psalm 96. Let me read this psalm for us real quick.

! Psalm 97.

Psalm 97.

Psalm 96.

Several songs have been written from this psalm as you may have heard along the way. Psalm 96. Well, verses 1 through 3, I see a clear exhortation to worship.

[2:01] Talking about worshiping the Lord in this psalm. Exhortation to worship. First phrase, oh, sing to the Lord a new song.

And as always, there's a right focus here. This worship is to the Lord, the one and only God. And it's a reminder that we should dedicate what He has given to us back to Him. Many, many scriptures talk about singing to the Lord. But I'm going to reference a few of these as I've listed for you.

Exodus 15. Psalm 13.1. Psalm 13.6. Psalm 13.6. I will sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously.

It's after they were delivered. It's after they were delivered. Psalm 13.6, I will sing to the Lord because He has dealt bountifully with me. Psalm 95.1, O come, let us sing to the Lord.

[3:00] Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Psalm 104.33, I will sing to the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

Jeremiah 20.13, sing to the Lord, praise the Lord, for He has delivered the life of the needy from the hands of evildoers. Then Ephesians 5.19-20, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And just so you know, I didn't pick this psalm just because I'm the worship pastor here and I want you to sing more, although that you could. But the emphasis is not so much on the singing but the focus of the singing.

Who are you singing to? And it can be a renewed focus, a new song. You will never run out of material to sing about when it comes to the character of God.

There's always more to praise Him for. It also reminds us that worship that pleases God is both fresh and creative. Singing the same song over and over, you might lose interest in it.

[4:21] Some of the hymns that we know by heart and could sing right now, we'd almost sometimes sing them without thinking about the words. So sometimes we need a different word or two put differently so that we can have a fresh perspective on the Lord.

Think about God and His actions toward us. He is fresh in His love and His redemptive and providential dealings with us. So let our worship of Him be fresh as we constantly compose new and exciting songs of praise.

But also, a new song doesn't necessarily mean a new composition, but could mean a fresh condition of the heart towards the grace of God. Lord, my heart has been down right now.

Help me to have a fresh understanding of Your grace. So sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord all the earth. Well, there's an extensive appeal here.

It's not only Israel, but the whole earth is to sing to the Lord. All peoples should love and worship Him. MacArthur especially in this psalm references that this psalm could be talking about the millennial reign of Christ when He comes again.

[5:37] But this psalm is not only spoken to the Old Testament Jew who longed for the Messiah to come, not only to us as the church waiting for His return, but it's also for those who live during His millennial reign.

It's interesting how the Word of God remains true through all time. Sing to the Lord all the earth. Sing to the Lord and bless His name. Well, this is the third time we've had the word sing to the Lord, the phrase sing to the Lord.

And you might think of it this way. The Trinitarian identity is a three-in-one God. We're exhorted to sing to the Lord three times. We should study and understand the role of our Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and celebrate and worship Him for all He does for us in each aspect of His divinity. But also a blessed identity. Sing to the Lord and bless His name. We should bless Him who has so divinely blessed us.

Bless His name. Since we are called by His name, both our praise and our actions should bring blessing upon His name instead of maybe ridiculing it by our lack of praise or by our actions.

[6:53] His name is blessed. We should worship Him and bless His name by both our actions and our worship. Tell of His salvation from day to day.

First of all, the first phrase there, tell of His salvation, we have a legitimate testimony here. We do not sing words without meaning. We're singing about His salvation.

We sing not out of a vacuum of truth, but rather an overflow of truth. We have so much to praise God for in His salvation of us. From Isaiah 52, verses 7-10, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, your God reigns.

The voice of your watchmen, they lift up their voice. Together they sing for joy. For eye to eye, they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted His people.

He has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared His holy arm before the eyes of all the nations. And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

[8:09] So we have a legitimate testimony. We're singing about something. And what better subject to sing about than His saving grace? So in this aspect, we are evangelizing.

We are singing of the gospel of Christ. And you think about it, sometimes a pastor gives a direct appeal to those who may be lost in our Sunday morning or Sunday evening services.

And he shares the gospel with them. But often, usually, it's a lesson for the church, those who have been redeemed. But as we sing and praise, we celebrate the gospel, we're praising Him for it, but we're also sharing it with one another, with those who may not know.

So, not only praising Him as a matter of worship, but it's also spreading the good news of Christ. So a legitimate testimony and a lasting testimony there.

Another lasting testimony. Enthusiasm for what God has done for us must not lose its fervor. The people of God should provide leadership by giving praise daily.

[9:16] You tell of His salvation from day to day. And really, there are not enough days to give adequate praise. As Spurgeon says, each day brings us deeper experience of our saving God.

Each day shows us anew how deeply men need His salvation. Each day reveals the power of the gospel. Each day the Spirit strives with the sons of men.

Therefore, never pausing, be it ours to tell out the glorious message of free grace. It's a lasting testimony. We will always need to share it one with another and with those who do not know Him.

Alright? Declare His glory among the nations. His marvelous works among all the peoples. Well, we have a notable salvation. Salvation.

His salvation is His glory. Declare His glory among the nations. Declare what He has done. What He gets glory for. Salvation of His people. The word of the gospel glorifies Him.

[10:21] And we need to proclaim whatever it is that glorifies Him. As Psalm 79.9 says, Help us, O God, of our salvation for the glory of Your name. Deliver us and atone for our sins for Your name's sake.

When He saves us, it's for His own glory. Therefore, we declare that glory to everyone. By the words glory and marvelous works, side by side there, He distinguishes this salvation from former deliverances.

You remember the children of Israel were delivered out of many things. many captivities. Egypt being one of the main captivities they were under. So they would celebrate how God had redeemed them out of there.

This points to even greater things. Glory among the nations. His marvelous works among all the peoples. Well, how is that? Because it's salvation that's been offered worldwide.

Not just for the Israelites. So, and that leads us to our next thing. Notable. Recipients. All nations must hear of God's glorious and marvelous actions for His people through Christ.

[11 : 32] So everyone needs to hear this. None are too degraded. None are too cultured. None are too savage. None are too refined. We all need this Gospel. And God is the recipient of this glory in our salvation.

Alright. Verses 4-6. Let me read those again. For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols.

But the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before Him. Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary. I see a strong motivation for worship in these verses.

Motivation for worship. For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. It's a great phrase. It shows His unsurpassed greatness. His unsurpassed greatness.

Praise should be proportionate to its object. Therefore, let it be infinite when rendered unto the Lord. Never ending.

[12 : 36] He is great upon great upon great. So we will never maximize our worship of Him. Psalm 40, verse 16. But may all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You.

May those who love Your salvation say continually, Great is the Lord. And you say continually because He is forever great. Infinitely. This is the one true God.

He alone is worthy of all praise and He is awe-inspiring just by virtue of who He is. So greatly to be praised is our God. He is to be feared above all gods.

It's unparalleled fear here. Unparalleled fear. This is not giving credence to other so-called gods by saying He is above all other gods.

Rather, it's a way of rejecting their presence by revealing His presence. When God is here, it's obvious. He is God and no one else is. It's an explanation really for the Gentiles that there is only one true God worthy of worship.

[13 : 41] The Gentiles had many, many gods and really, in fact, the Israelites kept bringing them in to the camp so they had to be reminded only one true God. Calvin's commentary mentioned that the psalmist may be referring to angels here.

Those who may reflect some sort of divinity, they think, being obviously bigger than them, who maybe reflect the glory of God but not be God Himself.

And we'll come back to that thought in a minute. But, even so, they're not God. They're angels. The next phrase for all the gods, the peoples are worthless idols.

And then, God has unequaled worth. Unequaled worth. So, we had other, they said, gods, whether they're angels or false gods, but then, they say outright idols here.

Created by man, innate objects, meaningless, meaningless rubble, and they're powerless. They're powerless. Jeremiah 10, 1-10.

[14 : 46] If you want to turn over to there real quick, it has an interesting little passage. Jeremiah 10, 1-10. Hear the word that the Lord speaks to you, O house of Israel.

Thus says the Lord, learn not the way of the nations, nor be dismayed at the signs of the heavens, because the nations are dismayed at them. For the customs of the peoples are vanity.

A tree from the forest is cut down and worked with an axe by the hands of a craftsman. They decorate it with silver and gold. They fasten it with hammer and nails so that it cannot move.

Their idols are like scarecrows in a cucumber field. They cannot speak. They have to be carried for they cannot walk. Do not be afraid of them for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good.

Then he goes on, There is none like you, O Lord. You are great, and your name is great in might. Who would not fear you, O king of the nations, for this is your due?

[15 : 46] For among all the wise ones of the nations and in all their kingdoms there is none like you. They are both stupid and foolish. The instruction of idols is but wood.

Beaten silver is brought from Tarshish and gold from Euphaz. They are the work of craftsmen and of the hands of the goldsmith. Their clothing is violet and purple. They are all the work of skilled men, but the Lord is the true God.

He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes and the nations cannot endure His indignation. It's a very sharp contrast between the things that men can come up with and it says these are skilled people who are putting these idols together.

They're very fancy. They look nice, but they're not the true God. Of course, we would say, well, of course, we know that. No idols. Yet, there are things that capture our attention.

I mean, you know, for some of us fellas, TV goes on, all of a sudden, we're captured. As soon as it's on, get a ball game going. Just think about where our focus is.

[16:52] But He has unequaled worth. The word actually means they are nobodies. Why fixate on worthlessness when you can focus on worthiness? And obviously, ascribing honor to either angels or idols is a gross error which detracts from God's glory.

But one commentator brought out the fact that the words are very close. When he says in the previous verse, He's to be feared above all gods. That's the word Elohim.

And then the worthless idols phrase is Elilim. So it's kind of a play on words what he's doing there with poetry. So in English, you might say, this would be close to these mighty beings are mighty useless or something like that.

Kind of making fun of the whole thing. And so many times in their culture, the majority view of the culture was, well, this is the main God of this land.

You worship this God. But obviously, the majority view is not necessarily right. And truth must never be tailored to suit popular opinion. We are the people of the book, right?

[18:00] We stand by the inspired word that nothing can detract from the glory of the only true God. The next phrase, but the Lord made the heavens. The first part of that verse is, for all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens.

See, unrivaled power. Unrivaled power. He's saying, they cannot be God because only the true God has made heaven.

They have no power over the heavenly realm. He created it, they did not. So the reality of God's divinity is proven by His works, what He has done. So you could say, the idol gods have no existence, but our God is the author of all existences.

They are mere earthly vanities, while He is not only heavenly, but He made the heavens. So obviously, none can rival Him. He is Creator God. Splendor and majesty are before Him.

Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary. The unmatched magnificence. Unmatched magnificence. Honor and glory, they both accompany His divine presence.

[19:16] When He would walk into a room, if you could imagine that, splendor and majesty are before Him. Why? Because He's there. God our King can only be known in splendor and majesty.

Both in His sanctuary in heaven and His sanctuary on earth, God was enthroned, is enthroned in glory and power. So how ought we to praise Him in splendor and majesty?

Praise Him for His divinity. Much of the temple in the Old Testament was decorated to depict the honor and the glory that was due to the Lord.

So it's very grandiose. As many of the cathedrals are in Europe, that was the idea. Make it big and glorious because God is glorious. But He is magnificent.

He's unmatched. All right, verses 7-9. Let's read those again. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples. Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

[20:20] Ascribe to the Lord the glory, do His name. Bring an offering and come into His courts. Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness. Tremble before Him all the earth.

So we have recognition in worship. Recognition in worship. It says, Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples.

The word ascribe is not really used in our vocabulary much today, but it means to credit or attribute cause.

In this case, we're attributing it to God. So we have observable glory. Observable glory.

Deuteronomy 32, 3.

Three passages here that use the word ascribe but kind of give a better idea of it. For I will proclaim the name of the Lord, ascribe greatness to our God. Job 36, 3.

[21:18] I will get my knowledge from afar and ascribe righteousness to my Maker. In Psalm 68, verse 34. Ascribe power to God whose majesty is over Israel and whose power is in the skies.

So they're observing about God and they're giving credit to Him. Attributing to Him the goodness, the greatness, and the glory that's to do His name. It's also a call to the Gentiles from the Israelites to acknowledge God as both deserving and worthy to be worshipped.

Why? Because it's inherent in Him. Inherent glory. Who is glorious but the Lord? Who is strong except our God?

God alone is great. And these are attributes of God that we praise and recognize. We have seen these just in the previous verse. Strength and glory, splendor and holiness are with Him.

But realize we cannot enhance the quantity or the quality of the divine splendor just because you ascribe glory to the God doesn't make Him more glorious. He's glorious. We're just acknowledging it.

[22 : 29] Our responsibility and our joyful and delightful privilege is to ascribe or predicate or declare or make known or display or pronounce what is inherently and eternally true of Him.

Ascribe to the Lord. Also, the glory that is due His name. And we have distinguishing glory. Distinguishing glory. And if you remember the start of this psalm said, sing to the Lord, sing to the Lord, sing to the Lord.

Now it's saying, ascribe to the Lord, ascribe to the Lord, ascribe to the Lord. It's a three-fold ascribing where we attribute glory to God. This speaks to who He is. And as before, we can never stop singing new material to praise Him for.

Same thing here. We can ascribe to Him infinitely. Spurgeon says, if we cannot bring in the full revenue which He justly claims, at least let us not fail from one of honest endeavor.

Let's give it our full-throated praise, our full-throated worship of Him. So God borrows nothing outside of Himself. He is, we just talked about inherently glorious.

[23 : 40] But in Himself, there is all that is worthy of praise. Who He is deserves honor and praise. Next phrase, bring an offering and come into His courts.

Bring an offering and come into His courts. When you remember the Old Testament, you were required to give sacrifices and offerings before you could rightly enter the presence of God. For us today, there is a finished atonement.

A finished atonement where Christ is our offering. As Hebrews 10, 11-14 says, And every priest stands daily at His service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices which never can take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God waiting from that time until His enemies should be made a footstool for His feet.

For by a single offering, He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. So when it says, bring an offering, we realize Christ is our offering. They also had high priests that gave the offering, but Christ is our high priest.

[24 : 49] Hebrews 2-17, Therefore He had to be made like His brothers in every respect so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

And of course, Christ is our advocate as well. That one phrase, bring an offering, meant a whole lot of things for the Old Testament Jew. And they needed these three things, an offering, and a high priest who is the advocate.

Christ fulfills all this for us. 1 John 2-1, My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin, but if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

So the finished atonement of our Savior has been our offering. So, that being made, let us bring thankful hearts to the Lord.

That can be the offering we bring. We are so thankful that you have done everything for us. And then, coming to His courts at full admission, you are allowed in. We have no access apart from Christ's redemptive work.

[25 : 56] And if you will just remember this, each time you come into prayer before the Lord, or praise in any fashion, Christ makes that possible. Just as the Jewish priests had to dress in the garments required by the Lord, so God's people must worship with clean hands and a pure heart and experience cleansing from the Lord before they worship Him.

How hard is it when you come in to worship the Lord and praise His name if you have sin just lacerated on your heart and you haven't confessed it and haven't been right before the Lord? It's hard to do it right.

And we want to do it right for His sake. We need to worship Him. So not only your motivation to worship, but your motivation to worship should be just as important as the manner in which you do worship.

We should be humble before our God, giving Him the respect and honor that He deserves. So coming into His course could be a glad, rejoicing thing, but it's also a humble and reverent and Lord, make me clean before You experience.

Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness. See here, holy worship, holy worship. And some translations also say worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

[27:14] If you think about it, the only beauty that He really cares for is the moral and spiritual beauty of the heart. The only beauty that God accepts is the splendor of holiness. And for the believer, it's the righteousness of Christ imputed to us by faith and the righteousness we live as we obey Him in the power of the Spirit.

We approach only through Christ's righteousness, but we please God when we are obedient children, we have obedient hearts. So worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness, not only because He is holy, but because He has made us holy and we long to live that way as unto Him. And then tremble before Him all the earth. Well, that's humble worship, holy and humble. When praising the Lord, the Jews would lift their hands and voices and looked up. But in their worship, they reverently bowed down. God expects reverence, holiness, and awe of His divine majesty and presence. This is an act of submission by all of God's people that we take part in.

And often we will tremble or get worried or uptight about the thought of facing an individual here on earth. A sinful, prideful, shameful, and errant human being.

[28:33] But how often do we tremble at the thought of facing our sinless, righteous, and glorious, and holy God? Just have a right view of man and a right view of God.

We fear Him most. And through the fear of the Lord, that's the beginning of wisdom how we are able to interact with one another. So be humble before Him in your worship.

Alright. Last section, verses 10-13. Say, among the nations, the Lord reigns. Yes, the world is established. It shall never be moved.

He will judge the peoples with equity. Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice. Let the sea roar and all that fills it. Let the field exult and everything in it.

Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord. For He comes, for He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness.

[29:30] Lastly, we have a proclamation of worship. A proclamation of worship. Say, among the nations, the Lord reigns. We see the dominion of the Lord here. Saying, spread His fame to everyone.

Draw attention to His worth and to His rule. And also warn them about the consequences of ignoring His kingship. And especially these last verses here specifically are talking about the second coming of Christ.

How He's going to come and reign over the earth for a thousand years. And it says, yes, the world is established. It shall never be moved. We have the decree of the Lord.

Christ's throne will be secure and established. Therefore, the world will also be secure and established at His order. He's going to rule and it will never be moved.

While today's world is often governed in chaos, as it seems, order will prevail as Christ reigns. He will judge the peoples with equity.

[30:37] That's the determination of the Lord. God will rule with impeccable justice and His righteous character will efficiently reign. He will set up His rule and He will efficiently reign.

Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice. This is universal worship. Above and below, you think, the heavens and the earth.

Let this joy be manifested to all, to all the universe. His coming is cause for great joy and His power throughout the universe will again be displayed. And so, the heavens will be glad.

The earth can rejoice. And then we have nature's worship. Let the sea roar and all that fills it. Let the field exult and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord for He comes.

We know that creation today is in bondage because of sin but will one day be set free as Romans 8:22 reminds us, for we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

[31:46] Creation is groaning for the return of Christ when He will reign and they will rejoice then. The whole of creation joins to celebrate the goodness of the Lord. His power is exercised in creation and it diffuses joy among all His subjects whether it be us, whether it be creation.

The faith of the psalmist turns itself from the expression of desire to the fully assured prediction of the event. It's not, I hope He comes, I want Him to come, I long for Him to come. It's, He's coming.

For He comes. Behold, He is coming. They will sing for joy at the worship that they observe. And our last phrase tonight, for He comes to judge the earth, He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness.

Like I've already been mentioning, this is approaching worship. Approaching worship that is coming. For the believer, this is something to take great delight in that He will judge us righteously and faithfully as we are in Christ.

If the insensible creatures in all creation have cause to rejoice when God appears, how much more we from whom He has taken evil and sin from us and given us life in Christ.

[33:06] We can rejoice that this is approaching, that we can take heart in what Christ is going to do. For the wicked, they will be trembling. For the shame of their godless joy will be exposed.

Sometimes folks are going around seemingly with joy, but it's not the true joy of Christ. No true joy is possible until we have seen the face of God. For when He comes to govern the world, the light of righteousness and truth will dispel all evil and hypocrisy.

His righteousness will endure forever. We will celebrate that righteousness. So in application tonight, let's encourage one another to worship God daily.

Ponder the greatness of God to renew your desire to worship. If you ever get down and don't want to worship, think about the greatness of God. It will get you right back in there. We should long to worship the greatness of God.

Give glory to God for His greatness and worship Him with humility. And then proclaim the coming of our King and celebrate His righteous reign even now. He reigns now, but we will also celebrate Him when He comes again.