

# THE LOOKOUT

NOVEMBER 2022

## Unit: Psalms (Part 2) Theme: Godly Heart

**Overview:** If our hearts are rooted in God (October lessons), then they will be godly. November, like February, is a good month to think of “heart” matters. Having a thankful heart, especially during this month of Thanksgiving, helps us develop a godly heart. Students will learn that a godly heart seeks after God, humbles itself before God, strives to be strong and courageous for God, and gives thanks and praise to God.

## HOW TO USE

Each week has a **lesson aim**, **lesson text**, and **supplemental text**.

**Tabs** indicate the week of each lesson.

Each week features three sections: **Study**, **Application**, and **Discovery**.

Use the **Discovery** questions to study, discuss, and apply the Scripture passages in a group or class.

**WEEK OF NOVEMBER 27, 2022**

**LESSON AIM:** **Give thanks and praise  
the Lord, for he is worthy.**

**UNIT:** Psalms (Part 2)

**THEME:** Godly Heart

**LESSON TEXT:** Psalm 100; Psalm 150

**SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT:** Psalm 136; Ephesians 5:19-20

## STUDY

# A HEART FULL OF THANKFUL PRAISE

BY MARK SCOTT

Don't put the pumpkins and pilgrims away just yet. Thanksgiving should linger into Advent. The giving of thanks and praising God should not just be seasonal. The two psalms in today's lesson will spotlight hearts full of thankful praise. The first is among several psalms dealing with singing praises to God. The second concludes book five of the Psalms and the entire Psalter in a crescendo of praise to God. The psalmists responsible for these two psalms had no problem with laryngitis. The decibel level of these psalms is off the charts. Why did the psalmists give thankful praise to God?

### Because God Is God and Because God Is Good

*Psalm 100*

This psalm inspired "*The Old Hundredth Psalm Tune.*" Search for that title via the internet; you will recognize the melody. As noted previously, parallelism is a key component of Hebrew poetry. It is very evident in this psalm; verses 1 and 2 are parallel with verse 4, and verse 3 is parallel with verse 5.

This psalm went way beyond Israel. The psalmist called for *all the earth to shout for joy to the Lord*. The word *shout* was a military term calling soldiers to battle. This was followed by the verb *worship*, which could be translated "serve" . . . similar to the idea behind the English word *liturgy*. People shouted and worshiped as they made their way to the temple. So, the psalmist told his people to enter God's *gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise* (a form of the word *hallel*). At first pass, this phrase might seem to restrict this shouting and worship to Israelites, since they obviously would be the ones entering the temple. But God cast his net broadly. He desired the temple would be a place of prayer "for the nations" (Mark 11:17).

The reason for this exuberant praise was twofold. The first reason is because God is God. There is no other (1 Corinthians 8:6). He is God because he is our maker. Therefore, he has first dibs on us; *we are his*. We are his *people, the sheep of his pasture*. The second reason for this praise is that God is good. We learn this from our earliest days. ("God is great; God is good; let us thank him for this

food.") This goodness expressed itself for us in *his love* (*chesed*—loving-kindness, loyal love) and in *his faithfulness* (stability, firmness, fidelity). Our thankful praise for God is not without cause. There are legitimate reasons for giving him praise. He is who he is, and he is good.

### Because God Is Holy and Because God Is Powerful

*Psalm 150*

This famous final psalm bursts forth in thankful praise. The lead line (v. 1) is the same as the tag line (v. 6): "*Praise the Lord.*" The word *praise* is a form of the word *hallelujah*. The psalmist spoke about this call to praise the Lord in prepositional terms.

First, God is to be praised "in." He is to be praised *in his sanctuary*. This is probably a reference to the temple although the word *sanctuary* simply means "holy place." Also, God is to be praised *in his mighty heavens*. This is not the typical word for heavens. It refers to the physical expanse of the universe in the firmament.

Second, God is to be praised "for." He is to be praised *for his acts of power*. This is probably a reference to his acts in history, such as the exodus. Also, he is to be praised *for his surpassing greatness* (stoutness or magnificence)—a clear reference to his character.

Third, God is to be praised "with." This section of the psalm concerns musical instruments. Trumpets are ram's horns. Harps and lyres are stringed instruments. Timbrels are basically tambourines. Strings and pipes could refer to a number of different instruments. Cymbals, then and now, had to do with percussion-type instruments.

Having exhausted his prepositions, the psalmist, who had a song in his heart and a message in his hand, sat down to write out what he thought of God. His final call was all-inclusive: "*Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.*" This call to give thanks goes beyond Israel. It is for every living thing. In the best world, the only natural response to God is thankful praise. God's goodness, holiness, and power are more than enough reasons to burst forth in thankful praise. ■

## LEARNING ABOUT WORSHIP FROM AN OLD SONGBOOK

BY DAVID FAUST

I never took a course in music theory, but I learned to sing four-part harmony as a boy in church hearing hymns and gospel songs like “The Church’s One Foundation” and “Standing on the Promises.” I absorbed the alto, tenor, bass, and melody lines while looking forward to the meal warming in the oven that our family would devour when we finally got home from church.

My brothers and I loved sports, so we weren’t thrilled when our parents decided we should take piano lessons. We learned the basics, but we didn’t practice very much, and Mom and Dad didn’t want to waste the \$1.00 per person it cost for our half-hour lessons. Soon the piano lessons ended, and instead of the scales and classical pieces our teacher assigned, we now could play whatever we wanted—and that’s when I started to enjoy playing the piano.

I imitated popular songs I heard on the radio, made up songs of my own, and sometimes played songs I found in the hymnal, *Great Songs of the Church*, that we used on Sundays. My favorite was number 322—“At Calvary”—because it was in the key of C and easy to play.

In biblical times, Jewish boys and girls soaked up the music they heard in the temple. Their families used an old songbook that’s still in print today: the book of Psalms. We can learn several practical lessons about worship from two of these ancient songs (Psalms 100 and 150).

### Why Do We Worship?

*God created us.* “It is he who made us” (Psalm 100:3). *He is perfect, consistent, and reliable.* “The Lord is good” (100:5). “His faithfulness continues through all generations” (100:5). *He has performed mighty deeds.* “Praise him for his acts of power” (Psalm 150:2). *He deserves our highest honor and recognition.* “Praise him for his surpassing greatness” (150:2).

### How Do We Worship?

Worship shouldn’t be boring. The Psalms tell us to worship *enthusiastically, cheerfully, and gratefully.* “Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth” (100:1). “Worship the Lord with gladness” (100:2). “Give thanks to him and praise his name” (100:4).

*We can worship the Lord with a variety of music.* “Come before him with joyful songs” (100:2). According to Psalm 150:3-5, the Hebrews praised God with physical movement (dancing), wind instruments (horns and pipes), stringed instruments (harps and lyres), and rhythm instruments (tambourines and cymbals).

Musical styles and tastes change with the times, but in any culture the goal of church music should be to glorify God and express our love for him, not merely to fill time in the service or entertain the crowd. Does your church’s music help you come before the Lord “with joyful songs”? Does it encourage unity, or division and frustration?

### Where Do We Worship?

*We can praise God anywhere,* but aren’t you thankful for special places set apart for the worship of God? “Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise” (100:4). “Praise God in his sanctuary” (150:1).

*Eventually we will join the angels and worship the Lord in the heavenly places.* “Praise him in his mighty heavens” (150:1).

### When Do We Worship?

*As long as we live.* “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord” (150:6). And even when we stop breathing, we can join the never-ending, awe-inspiring worship service in the heavenly realms. That old Hebrew songbook assures us, “his love endures forever” (100:5).

**Personal Challenge:** What do you appreciate most about God? Say a prayer of praise, expressing your love for the Lord and your gratitude for his blessings. ■

**Author’s Note:** Many older readers of *Christian Standard* and *The Lookout* may remember *Great Songs of the Church*, which Standard Publishing first printed and offered for sale in 1937. The hymnal’s Foreword called it “probably the costliest collection of great religious copyrights ever assembled in a single volume.” When he renewed the copyright in 1965, compiler E. L. Jorgenson included this note at the end of the Foreword: “And now, in profoundest adoration and gratitude, the work is again committed to the care of Him whose we are and whom we serve—Christ Jesus, the Lord.”

## DISCOVERY

### BY MICAH ODOR

1. Whom did you tell how thankful you are for them over the last week?
2. Tell us about your Thanksgiving. Whom did you see? What did you eat? What did you do?
  - Thanksgiving week isn't quite over, so let's spend a little more time being thankful. How have you experienced God's faithfulness over the past year?

Ask two people to read aloud **Psalm 100** and **Psalm 150** one after the other, preferably from different Bible versions. Then ask a third person to paraphrase both psalms in as much detail as possible.

3. The first three verses of Psalm 100 give three ways to worship God. What are they?
  - Which one of these ways to worship is easiest for you and which is hardest?
4. Psalm 150 provides an interesting progression of praise. First we're told to praise God "in" certain places. What are those places?
  - Then we're told to praise God "for" certain things. What things?
  - And then we're told to praise God "with" certain things. What things?
5. If you were writing your own psalm, what would be your "in"? Where is your sanctuary?
  - What would be your "for"? What are the attributes that you praise?
  - What is your "with"? What things can you do to praise God?
6. What do we know is true about God by reading these two psalms?
7. What do we know is true about ourselves?
8. What would you need to change in your life to give more glory and praise to God?
9. Whom will you tell about God's praiseworthiness this week?
10. Based on our study and discussion, complete the sentence: "I will . . ."

**For Next Week:** Read and reflect on **Matthew 9:35-38; 10:24-33** as we begin a new unit on Matthew: "Jesus Is Lord." You can also read next week's supplemental texts as well as the Study and Application sections as part of your personal study. ■