

**Shout for joy to the Lord all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness, Come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us and we are his; We are the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; Give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever, his faithfulness continues through all generations.**

Can you put your hand up if you did any shouting this week. Ok then, who “raised their voice”? Believe it or not I often get told to stop shouting. I shout when I am in another room and can't be bothered to get up and go talk to the person I want. And I shout when angry or frustrated.

How many of you shouted for joy this week? Who shouted because they were so happy they had to let it out by shouting? Not so many of you? If we take football out of the equation how many of us shout for joy about life? I guess my next question will answer itself then. How many of you shouted for joy to the Lord this week? We may feel like shouting to God when things go wrong because we are angry with him, and we may feel like shouting to the Lord because he seems deaf to some of our prayers, but who shouted to the Lord because we are so happy about him?

That is what this word from God, Psalm 100 calls us and the whole earth to do here this morning, **“shout for joy to the Lord.”** Joy has to do with enjoyment of something or someone. Do you enjoy God? That might sound like a silly question, but do you, enjoy God?

This psalm calls us to come to church and **shout for joy to the Lord, Worship the Lord with gladness and Come before him with joyful songs.** You can't shout to the Lord and sing to him unless you actually appreciate God and enjoy him and his company. Someone asked me a few months ago “Why do Christians sing in church”. Good question. Why do we? And why do you? Or do you find it hard to sing to God, not just because you have a singing voice like mine but because you can't see the point. You don't actually enjoy God?

Maybe the problem is that we can't see him, so it's hard to appreciate him. Maybe before you come or as you sit here stop and think what you have enjoyed in your life this week. Where have you found fulfilment and happiness, contentment? Where have you been blessed? Then remember whose hand it comes from. It comes from God, the God you can't see but is behind everything you enjoy in life. We praise what we enjoy in life and the person who provides that enjoyment. We come here to praise the one who gives us life itself and everything we enjoy in it.

**Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us and we are his; We are the sheep of his pasture.** You are his creation and you are a sheep of his pasture, he has enabled you to enjoy your life again this week, given you health and strength, fed and clothed and surrounded you with people. He has looked after you again this week in all sorts of ways. And he is here to feed you with his words and with his meal at communion, and to surround you with forgiveness for anything you feel guilty about this week.

If you only focus on what you think God has not done for you and what you are missing in life and on what other people seem to be enjoying in life you will always be angry at God, or see him as impersonal, uncaring and distant and just ignore him and live without him. But if you focus on what you do enjoy, and recognise it as a gift from the hand of God then you will always have reason to come here and to come with a thankful heart ready to enjoy and praise him. Joy, thanks and praise, and their expression in singing and even shouting comes from knowing that the Lord is the God who made you and enables you to live and enjoy anything and that he is here with you today.

**Give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever, his faithfulness continues through all generations.**

The second reason we are given to enjoy and thank God is his love and faithfulness. We experience those things especially in Christ. And we experience them in a special way in worship. When we look at the cross and see how much God loves us, when we stop and think of the things we were forgiven by God of again this morning, how faithful he is in showing up here for us on Sunday mornings even though we have usually been unfaithful in some way during the week, then we can't help but thank him and praise his name.

If you are someone who suffers from low self esteem come to worship. There God forgives you, he says you are acceptable to him, he wants to be with you whatever your life has become this past week. He wants you to get to know him and the enormity of his love for you better. He doesn't want you to leave here feeling bad about yourself but good about his forgiving love and commitment to you. St Paul reminded us in Romans 5 today that because we are justified by Christ we have peace, we have hope and we have God's love poured into us!

Sometimes when we come to church we are angry, tired, stressed and not focussed. The devil loves to use those feelings to rob us of our joy and enjoyment of being with God. He loves to get us focussed on ourselves. Sometimes he gets us focussing on each other in negative ways or on the "how" of worship rather than the "who" we worship. We will always struggle with joy in God and joy in worship, because the devil gets us focussing on anything rather than God and our self centred nature is happy to go along with that. That's why attitude is important when we come together to be with God. I hope you all come here with attitude, an attitude of gratitude. **Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; Give thanks to him and praise his name.**

To many Aussies what happens here today makes no sense. They'd rather be off doing something else or staying under the covers. . If you went to the Ultimate Blokes Expo at Wayville today you probably won't find a Christian stand inviting you to join them in praising God! The only singing will probably be Jimmy Barnes being belted out over the PA. Thanking God, praising him, singing and enjoying him only makes sense if you recognize him as God, as the one who made you, made your world, enables you to enjoy the things you do, and who has loved you to death when Jesus died to forgive your sins. Christians (including men) celebrate knowing the ultimate bloke, a bloke who commits to his mates and sticks by you even when you let him down, a bloke who would give you the shirt off his back and did give his life for you. A bloke who helps you out all week and puts a bottle of wine and a loaf of bread on the table for you at the end of the week and gives you himself completely. A bloke who single handedly by his own blood sweat and tears pulled off the greatest victory in history and who wants to tell you about it and let your share in it every Sunday. That's why Christian blokes sing too, sing for joy and sometimes even shout for joy to God. There are three times blokes feel like singing – when they win, when they are loved, and when they are full. Christians celebrate and sing because of God's love, God's victory and that our lives are full of his blessings.

It seems crazy that we get so excited about a bunch of guys kicking a piece of inflated leather through two wooden posts more than another bunch of guys doing the same thing, and we watch them gather in a huddle at the end of the game and sing for joy as they hug each other, and yet it seems so hard to get excited about singing for joy to the God who gave us life to enjoy it, eyes to see it and voices to sing about it, the ability to do anything and who has won the emphatic victory for us over sin and death in our lives and loves and commits himself to us for all eternity. We shout for joy to God together today because a little bloke called Joshua now shares in the greatest victory with us.

I guess some people are naturally happier than others, and we have different personalities. Singing to God and expressing joy by shouting comes more naturally for some than others, and some of you struggle with things in life others don't have to. But you can all know God, enjoy his love, and recognize his care for you as your creator and saviour.

Psalms 100 was taught to one of my children by a teacher who suffered from depression. He can still recite it to us today. His wife had to literally kick him out of bed every morning to get to school (not Darren but his teacher) and he would collapse when he got home. But he taught these words to his class. He loved music and song and played in church and worshipped every week. The farmers and miners who made up that congregation thought he wasn't much of a bloke - they didn't live with his depression. That this man still had joy in God in the midst of the fog of depression and that he was given the strength to front up to a class each day at all was a miracle in my book. He could have stayed home, blamed God and found no reason to come to church and sing at all. But the ultimate bloke who died for him, the God of the cross whose love was with him even in his suffering and who opened his eyes to see his daily blessings enabled him to enjoy God and praise his name even in the dark. He never shouted, in class or in church, but he sang and played music and he was thankful for the small things he enjoyed and for Christ's ultimate victory for him. He saw thanking, praising, singing and in his own quiet way shouting to the Lord as a healthy thing to do. I hope you do too.