

## Joy Trumps Despair

Psalm 100

Satan spreads misery and death in the world, but we don't have to wallow in it! The Bible says that *greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world* (1 John 4.4). Psalm 100 is a recipe for joy that doesn't depend on circumstances. Its source is the Lord, and we experience it when we serve, know, and thank Him.

A call to unbridled joy: *Make a joyful noise to the Lord...* (1)

Practical ways to experience joy (2-4)

*Serve the Lord...*

*Know the Lord...*

*Thank the Lord...*

The only sure source of joy: *For the Lord is good...* (5)



## Digging Deeper

1. We don't know for sure, but Psalm 100 may have been written for the dedication of Solomon's temple around 960 B.C. It was a call to all the tribes of Israel to shout for joy at the completion of the temple and go on to greater things in worship of Yahweh in the years to follow. Sadly, the 'mountaintop experience' was short-lived: Israel divided into two kingdoms after the death of Solomon and eventually wandered away from the Lord, ending up in captivity. We are not so different today; we find it easy to lift our voices in joyful worship on Sunday, but harder to retain that joy through the week. If that describes you, take a moment right now to tell God you want to know His joy more.
2. The Hebrew word translated 'serve' (v2, *'abad*) means to work as a slave. The motivation for this total commitment is love for God (compare the law for slaves in Exodus 21.2-6). Slavery in our world is terrible and unjust: Why is 'working as a slave for life for God' different? Is your service for the Lord marked by 'gladness' and 'singing'? To what extent of service does God call us? (See Romans 12.1)
3. In v3, the Hebrew word for *know* (*yāda* ' ) includes recognition and intimacy. The idea is for us to both know who God is, and to embrace Him as our Lord. What do we need to know about God? What does it mean to be *the sheep of His pasture*?
4. Verse 4 exhorts us to *enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise*. What are these *gates/courts*? What attitude do we come with? How often do you 'come to the Lord' in your daily life with nothing but thanksgiving? Read Luke 7.36-50. What prompted the woman here to act as she did? How thankful are you to God for His forgiveness of your sin?
5. In a world firmly 'in the grip' of Satan (see 1 John 5.9), there is always pain and trouble, but even here, God's *goodness* sustains us. His *mercy* points to His *loyal love* (*hesed*), and *truth* to His unchanging *faithfulness*. How has God exhibited His *goodness* in your life?