



Sermon Transcription • Psalm 100 (NIV)

Entering With

Pastor Greg Harris

[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

My name's Greg, I'm one of the pastors here, and I'm actually the campus pastor for our East Abbotsford Campus, and earlier this week, my family - my two kids, and my wife, and myself actually went with my side of the family - so my two sisters, their husbands, their kids and my parents. We all spent some time at a little lake in the Okanagan - and you might be thinking to yourself, "Man, he's so brave bringing two little kids camping." But I wasn't - we were in a hotel [laughter], so I wasn't brave, I was smart is what I was. We didn't really know how my littlest child would respond to the time at the lake; she's 17 months old now, her name's Emily. And she loved it, actually. She was just right in there, in the sand, and she was making the castles and she was getting little water things filled to get her hands with the sand off so she didn't have to feel the sand on her hand. She was going in and out of the water, she was playing on the floaties - the whole deal. She was lovin it. At one point she was just overcome with the whole experience that she just ran to me and just gripped her little arms around my neck and was just so grateful.

I tell you that story because I think we've been designed to respond with gratefulness when good things are done for us. It's true of little 17 month old girls when they're at the beach - but it's also true of God's people with their heavenly Father. We're spending our summer looking at various Psalms, and this morning we're going to be looking at Psalm 100: it's a call to worship, it's a call to God's people to respond to God's goodness with giving grateful praise. So here's what the Psalm says, Psalm 100:1-5,

"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 his people, 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."

This morning we're going to be looking at Psalm 100, and Psalm 100's basically about compelling people, or urging people - God's people - towards corporate worship. And so what we're going to do is we're going to look at this passage, we're going to look at it in three ways. First, we're going to see the motivating truth that this passage provides for our corporate worship. Secondly, we're going to see that we should enter together, and thirdly, we'll see that we should enter with. So a motivating truth, enter together, and third, enter with.



[Motivating Truth]

First, let's look at the motivating truth. This short, little Psalm was just riddled with commands, with imperatives, with things we need to be doing. So what I'm going to do is I'm going to read the Psalm again, it's nice and short - we can do it again, and on the screen it's going to have little indicator marks for what words are actual commands to God's people to do. Okay, so here's the Psalm with the instructions, or the imperatives - the commands, highlighted for us. Psalm 100:1-4,

“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 his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.”

It's a series of commands that the Psalmist is giving to God's people. These are all the things that we should be doing. Why should we be doing them? Well, verse 5, the Psalmist provides the motivating truth for the commands that he provides, Psalm 100:5 says,

“For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.”

See, it's God's goodness, characterized by his enduring love for his people that motivates us to follow the commands of Scripture. More particularly, it's God's goodness as characterized by his enduring love that motivates our corporate worship when we're together. See the enduring love of God had a context for the Psalmist. So the Psalms; all the Bible is written by a particular person at a particular time in history to a particular people. It's not just a book of fairy tales, and fables, and cool songs. It's actually written by people, for people, in a place and time. So what were the evidences of God's enduring love to the Psalmist and the people that he's writing to. Well, primarily the story of the people of God up until this point was that the people of Israel, began not actually as a people, as a nation; they began as slaves, as people who were oppressed with no national identity, with no freedoms. They were under the heavy hand of their Egyptian oppressors. Now God had made a promise to their ancestors, to say that I am going to make you into a people who are going to bless the world. But they were living under the oppression, and they call out to the God who said he would deliver and form a people out of their ancestor, and they say, “You have to remove us from this slavery.” And God, in an act of love, and mercy, removes these people from their oppressor. And he makes them his people, and he gives them a land to be in. Those were the evidences of God's enduring love, the fact that he rescued them from slavery and he made them his own.

The story's actually very similar for those of us who follow Jesus. The narrative, the scope of the narrative, the framework is very similar, there's just some different details. See the reality is, is that every single one of us is born into a state of slavery to sin. We're born into a state of enslavement against the God who was there, and we actually are our own desire for our will to be done and not God's will to be done, enslaves us. But, God wasn't content to leave us in our slavery, instead he decided to send a deliverer to come and remove us, so that he can form us into his people, like the



sheep of his pasture. And he promised to give us an eternal land, where he will be our God, and we will be his people. Those are the evidences of God's enduring love to us. Here's the point to all of that: the motivation that's provided by the Psalmist for the corporate worship, is the goodness of God demonstrated by his enduring love. That's why we worship.

You know as well as I do that we're in the season of enduring love events. We call them weddings. Depending on your life stage, you're either going to like 10 or none - I don't know what it is, but it's always feast for famine with weddings, right. We just all need to work out a deal among friends who are all getting married at the same time - like no one gets each other gifts, right? I think that's fair, but it's not catching on yet. [Laughter] So weddings are these moments, they're these events where enduring love for one another is being professed.

Actually just yesterday I had the privilege of officiating a wedding of a couple from the East Abbotsford Campus. And officiating weddings are always a bit of a hit to my pride because I have to put on my like, my suit, my one suit and the dress shirt I wear under that suit, and the top button just ... I don't know it doesn't go on as easy as it used to. So I'm going into these weddings thinking to myself, "I should like run or something. I don't know." [Laughter] But weddings are amazing events, where enduring love is being professed; but if you're a believer, if you're a Christian, the best part of weddings isn't actually the celebration of the bride and groom. The best part of a wedding - for a believer - is what this moment is actually pointing forward to. See what I mean by that is that the Scriptures use the image of husband and wife and weddings as an image for God's love with his people. Ephesians 5 is a portion of Scripture written by the Apostle Paul, to a group of people in a place called Ephesus. And in this part of the book of Ephesus, he's talking about marriage and how husbands and wives should relate to one another - and in the middle of these instructions about how relationships and marriages should work among Christians, he writes these words. Ephesians 5:31-33,

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”

See Paul's in the midst of giving instructions to Christian husbands and wives about what a flourishing marriage should look like, but he can't help himself, in the middle of the instructions to say, "But you do know this is the picture of the gospel right?" Of a husband and a wife coming together, this is a picture of the great cosmic love story that's taking place between Christ and his people. See the best part of Christian weddings isn't the enduring love that's being professed between a groom and bride - the great part of a Christian wedding, or weddings that Christians attend, is it's a picture of our future with our God - where we will be fully, finally, eternally with him. He will be ours, we will be his. The Scriptures kinda mixed some of the metaphors when it comes to God's love for us and weddings and marriages. Revelation 19 talks about our future with God as ... like a wedding reception. Right, it's called the marriage supper of the Lamb, or the wedding supper of the Lamb. And actually, the author of Revelation 19:9 actually uses the words, "Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb."



You know when you get the invitation, to go to the wedding, this summer and it says RSVP by, and you don't RSVP by that date, right. You're like, "I'm going to wait for them to contact me. All I know is that the RSVP date is the date they text me to say, 'Are you coming to the wedding?'" I don't think I'm the only one who does that. You get the invitation, and you decide you're going to go - and then there's the moment where you show up to wedding reception and you have that moment of angst and anxiety because you have to figure out, "Who am I going to sit with for the next four hours of my life, right?" And you go up to the little list, and you see the table numbers, and you're at one of the highest numbered tables and you look at the list of people you don't know anybody. This happens to me all the time cause when I get invited to weddings, they're like, "I have a crazy uncle who doesn't know Jesus - and Greg's a pastor [laughter], so this is happening." You show up and you see your name on the list, see what the author of Revelation 19 is saying is - you are blessed if at the great day yet to come, you come into the great feast and you see your name on that list. Because we know that in and of ourselves, our own goodness, our own ability to follow God - we should have nothing to do with the wedding reception. At best, they should let us in the dish pit so we could see the party going on. But actually if you come to faith in Christ; if you hear the good news of what Jesus has done for you in his life and in his death and his resurrection to save you from your enslavement to sin, and bring you into the people of God - you will show up *on that day* and see your name at the head table. "Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb."

There's a party coming, it's not actually just the wedding ceremony that's a picture of our future, it's actually the dance after. This is why it's a good thing for Christians to celebrate. It's a good thing for us to fast and mourn - it's a good thing for us to party hard because it's a sign of the future yet to come, of a joyous time with our Lord where he will be our God. We will be his people. There's a wedding coming - are you invited? Have you accepted the invitation to come? The RSVP's just hanging out on your fridge, today's the day of salvation. You should go to the wedding. That's the motivating truth for why we do what the Scriptures command us to do, is that God has demonstrated his enduring love for us, and one day we will fully, finally, eternally be his people and he will be our God.

[Enter Together]

The rest of the Psalm actually has all kinds of different commands, we're just going to focus on one of the verses - the command that's listed there, and we're going to look at it in two different ways. So first - we're going to see how the Psalm 100 commands God's people to enter together. Psalm 100:4 says,

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name."

If you grew up in Sunday School like I did, that line, "enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise," might of triggered a Sunday School memory for you. Right - he has made me glad. <singing> I will enter his gates with thanksgiving in my heart ... <laughter>some of you are nodding, I will enter his courts with praise, I will say this is the day that the Lord has made, I will rejoice for he has made me glad.</singing> And then there's clapping parts, it's a great time. [Laughter] When I'm



reading this passage this week, I read that line: we'll enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise, and I start thinking to myself about that Sunday School song. But what's interesting about the Sunday School version is that it's all me based. Right - he has made *me* glad, *I* will enter his courts, *I* will enter his gates. It's very me focused, but actually the way that this reads, is actually as a plural. It's, you all should enter his gates, you all should enter his courts - it's like the Psalmist is Texan here right, "All, y'all... all, y'all should enter his gates, all y'all should enter the courts." It's a plural command, it's a command to a group, it's for all of us, not just individuals, it's a corporate thing.

See the Psalmist is commanding all of us to enter his gates and his courts. Now that language of gates and courts is tabernacle, temple language which depending on your familiarity with Christianity, those might be completely foreign concepts to you, or just kind of like, "I think I've heard those words but I don't really know what they mean." Essentially, the tabernacle was a none permanent structure, where the people of God built a place where God himself would dwell in this area called the Holy of Holies. That you would only be able to enter into - only the high priest, only the top priest in the people of Israel was able to go into the Holy of Holies - only after a cleansing ceremony of his sin, because in the Holy of Holies was the ark of the covenant, the place in which the ten commandments were actually stored. And the ark of the covenant, in the Holy of Holies, was the footstool of God himself. So inside the Holy of Holies was God's very presence - to just walk into the Holy of Holies without actually being cleansed of your sin and having the right things done to you, you would actually die on the spot because of the holiness of God. And then out from the Holy of Holies there was a separate area, and then out from that separate area, was this big area called the courts. And the courts was a loud, stinky, smoky area, because this is where all the people would come in with their grain sacrifices, their burnt sacrifices - all the different things that they brought as an act of worship, took place in the courts. It was a bustling, hustling, loud, stinky, smelly, hot kind of place - the courts. And then the gates would be the way you would get in. The temple, that the Israelites built, was like the tabernacle, but just permanent, made of stone. So we're not totally clear when Psalm 100 was written ... are the gates and courts referring to the tabernacle, the non-permanent structure. Is it referring to the temple, you know, the stone built structure? Either way, what the Psalmist is saying is, we need to be entering into the house of the Lord together. We all need to enter. This is the place where God's presence is, this is the place where we actually worship the living God together. You should enter his courts, all of y'all. The point the Psalmist is making, is that we should be coming together in corporate worship. Or in other words, the Psalmist here is affirming to us, the goodness of gathering together for the sake of worshipping the God who has saved us.

There's a book in the New Testament called the book of Hebrews. And in the book of Hebrews the author is trying to engage with Jewish people who, at one point came to faith in Jesus, but because of the hardships associated with it - were thinking about not following him anymore. And at one point in the letter, the author of the book of Hebrews - is making a direct connection between what the temple was and who Jesus is. The author's saying, "Look the temple was the place where God's very presence was; Jesus is God himself. That the temple was the place where the sacrifices for our sins were made so we could have a restored relationship with God. Jesus himself is that sacrifice for us." He's making the connections between what the point of the temple was and what the point of the person of Jesus of Nazareth was - and then in chapter 10 he writes these words, Hebrews 10:19-25,



“Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place [the Holy of Holies] by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain [that divided the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple], that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God [so Jesus isn’t just God, he’s the priest who gets us to God], let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. [The author of Hebrews is saying, ‘Look my Jewish friends don’t give up on Jesus, to go back to the temple, because Jesus is the point of the temple. So keep following him.’ So in light of that what now does the author of Hebrews say, verse 23] Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 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.”

See the author of Hebrews is saying, in light of what Jesus has done for us, in being the fulfillment and completion of the purposes of the temple - we should commit ourselves to worshipping God together. Rather than giving up on the habit of worshipping together, we should continue on, and press forward. So the question for us is, is gathering with other Christians weekly a priority for us? Or do we have a habit of giving it up? Now look, I’m self aware that I’m currently speaking to a group of people in a room where we’ve gathered together for worship, okay. So in this way I’m kind of preaching to the choir, right. But I’m also self aware that our sermons go on a podcast that people listen to. And I’m aware that often times we will treat podcasts like our [air quotes] church for the week. So if you’re listening to the podcast, I used air quotes for church, okay? We think to ourselves, “I don’t need to go and worship with other people, I have a podcast, I have Spotify, I can do it on my own. And I can do it out in creation, I can do it with just my family - I don’t need to gather with other believers, I’ll put it off.” And we put it off for all kinds of good reasons, right. You’re really busy during the year, and you’ve very little time to see your family. And so you decide to go up to a cabin for months on end in summer and instead of finding a local body of believers, in that area where your cabin is, you decide, “No for the summer months I’m just going to listen to a podcast, I’ll just give it up. It’s not a big deal.” But then there’s also - you’re know you’re kids soccer games and their baseball games, and their hockey games and those are often on Saturday nights and Sunday mornings - and, “That’s okay, we’ll still follow along with the sermons and we’ll still listen to Spotify, and actually Run for Water happens every year, and that’s a really good opportunity for us to do something good, right. So instead of go to church that morning, I’ll just go to Run for Water because we should be light of the world and we should go and help people and we should do good to all people, and this is a really good opportunity. So why don’t we just do Run for Water instead of go to church.” It’s actually funny, the Run for Water weekend, we as staff just know that weekend our numbers will plummet in attendance.

See the question isn’t: can I ever miss church without being this sinner beyond being redeemed? No the question is, is: do we have a habit of neglecting to gather with other Christians? Have we worked into our routine, in the way we view our Christian life, that actually gathering together with other people, this is an optional part. Or do we see it as essential. Do we actually book our travel plans



around gathering with other Christians? Do we book our vacations around being able to gather with other Christians? How do we spend our time when we have opportunities to gather with other believers - do we take those opportunities, or are we in the habit of neglecting to meet with one another? Psalm 100, is actually commanding God's people to enter his courts together, there's a corporate nature to our worship.

I love being able to look out and see when people are coming to church. At the East Abbotsford Campus, I'll often stand at the front doors where people will walk through, and I can see people walking from the parking lot, for a distance, and one of the benefits of the East Abby Campus as a campus pastor is there's like one entrance. Right, Downes Road, there's like 87 entrances that you can enter into - and so it's impossible for us to be at every single one. But at East Abby, I can see when people are entering it - and I love seeing elderly people with walkers, cause every single step is a commitment to worshipping with the people of God. It's a cost to them, to gather together with others. I love seeing young families come in late with a diaper bag on, and with kids screaming, and the parents are screaming - and they're just trying to make it to church 10 minutes late if they can, because they are committed to worshipping with other Christians. So the question for us is, are we in the habit of giving up meeting with other Christians at church? Psalm 100's actually commanding us, that in light of God's enduring love in Jesus, we should all be entering together.

[Enter With]

Finally, we should be entering with. We should note here, in Psalm 100:4 that the Psalmist doesn't just command us to gather together, he says to enter with, verse 4,

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise.”

Now for us to understand what's ... the image being evoked in the first readers would be, we kind of need to go back to the historical context. So, the people of God are being called to come to the temple, or the tabernacle, to worship God, right. To come together. Well how would that worship have looked? Well, they would have come with their hands full of the sacrifices they were going to bring that morning, that day. In other words, the call to the people of God to say, “Enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise,” is basically saying, “Bring your grain, bring your animals for the burnt offerings to the Lord together.” The image is of people coming with something in their hands rather than coming to church empty handed - which I think is really intriguing, because I think for the majority of us, we treat church as an event that we consume. We come empty handed, expecting to be filled; rather than coming with something to give, for the purpose of contributing to the whole. Let me put it like this: if you want to watch football, or if you want to be involved with the football game, you have two options. One, is you can participate as an observer, you can be in the stands or at home with your bowl of popcorn ... popcorn's cheaper at home, either way, you can mow on the popcorn watching the action take place. Or you can strap on some pads and your jersey and get some grass stains as you sacrifice yourself for the team. The call of the local church is to put the popcorn down and get some grass stains. It's not to be an observer only, it's to be a contributor to what's going on.



We are entering his courts *with* praise. We're not coming empty handed, we're coming prepared to worship our Lord.

So what does it actually look like, what is the with-ness of our worship look like? Little sidenote, when I was trying to figure out - what do I call my points, I wanted to call this point; can I get with-ness. [Laughter] But I didn't, your response makes me feel like I should've though so [laughter] ... if I preach this one in six years, stay tuned for that. What does it look like to have a with-ness in our worship, to not come empty-handed? Well part of it is a preparation - are we coming to church actually prepared to be engaged in what's taking place? So, normally we have our sermon series go through books of the Bible. We'll go through Philemon, or Ruth, or Romans; and people will kind of have an idea of what we're going to be talking about next week, on the basis of what we talked about this week. Right, like the detectives in our midst can be like, "Ah, I bet they're going to talk about this passage next." And so you can read it ahead of time. It was interesting, once we started the sermon series in our Summer in the Psalms, one of the pieces of feedback we heard from a bunch of people was, "We don't like not knowing what Psalm is being preached next week, because we can't prepare ourselves to hear it preached." Isn't that a great point? The challenge was, people were saying, "Look, I would love to know what's coming up on Sunday, because I want to be able to read it, and prepare my heart to hear what God has to say through his word, for us that day. There's a preparation that's taking place as people are coming to gather and to worship God.

I see people coming into church early; you're coming in, you're sitting down, you're praying, you're life stage allows you that kind of buffer time to sit in silence before church. Some of your life stage doesn't permit you that time to sit in silence, because the kids are screaming and you're 10 minutes late. But even in that stage, we can prepare ourselves for being active contributors to the worship service by even just coming in with the screaming kid on our hip, making a commitment inside our head, that if the Lord is kind to me and they stay in the nursery, I'm at least going to commit to singing the songs. Like when the songs are playing, I might not love the songs, I might think the bass is too loud, I might not like the way that Andrew does it, but I am coming, not as a consumer to receive, I'm coming as a participant to give. So I'm going to sing songs to the Lord. I'm adopting a mindset not just of a consumer, but of a contributor. I'm going to enter his courts with - there's a with-ness to it.

Being a contributor to the church doesn't just look like being prepared to participate, it also can look like us being sacrificial for the sake of *others* being able to participate. Right, serving of our time - every campus has stories of people who are giving up hours of their time, for the sake of different parts of our gatherings to take place. We have people who are willing to commit a few evenings a week to practice the songs that we may or may not like, so that we can all sing together. We have people throughout the year at our Downes Road Campus, who come and they commit to coming early on Saturday night so they can make a meal, so people have something to eat before the service. We have people who come really early on Sunday mornings to help make the brunches and the snacks, so we can have something after the services here. We have people in the Mission Campus who have snot on their shoulders from your kid who won't stop crying. We have all kinds of people, serving in all kinds of ways to give us the opportunity to have just a moment to think about God and his word. And our life, for every moment of our day, we are being inundated with thoughts and ideas from the culture, and thoughts and ideas from within our own heart, we have a minute in church services to think about



God and what he's doing in the world through his son Jesus Christ. And that's only able to take place, because other people have come to church with something to give, mainly their time.

So look, we as pastors and leaders and people who are committed to the mission of this church, we just want to compel you - look if you have been sitting and eating popcorn for a really long time, we need you to get on the field. We need you to get some grass stains on that jersey. I know that there are good reasons and there are seasons of our lives where we just need the back row; we just need a timeout, we just need a break because of what's going on around us. But I also know that for a lot of us that just becomes a habit; that once that hard season's over, we don't actually do the hard work of strapping on the pads, throwing on the jersey, and getting grass stains on for the sake of others being able to worship God. We don't come with things ready to give, we come empty handed, asking everyone else to fill us. That the local church isn't just watching with popcorn in our hands, the local church is strapping on the pads and getting on the field and serving one another, so that we can all worship our Lord.

So the question is: do you still have popcorn in your hand or is there a with-ness to your worship? See, just like a little girl who thanks her dad for taking her to the lake, I think we've been designed to give grateful praise to the God who showed his enduring love to us. The Psalm tells us that a chief way that we give our grateful praise is a commitment to gathering to worship with other Christians, and it's a commitment to having a with-ness with our worship. So let's pray.

Father, you're good, your word is good. You've demonstrated your goodness *mostly* to us through your son, Jesus Christ - who through his work, through his life, through his death, through his resurrection we have the opportunity to have a right relationship with you, not just now, but eternally so. We know there's a wedding coming, we know there's a party coming that you are inviting us to enter into. Lord, I pray that truth would cement deeply into our hearts, that out of the overflow of our hearts we would exude with grateful praise for who you are - that we wouldn't just come empty handed that we would come ready to give because you are worthy of our praise. We would come ready to serve because others need the opportunity to give you the praise. So Lord we love you, we praise you, we pray all these things for your fame, and in Jesus name, Amen.

God bless you guys.