
The Pilgrim's Joyful Shouts

Psalm 33

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It has been said of Christians, “We are people of the book”? But could it also be said of Christians, “We are people of the hymnbook”?

A song of rejoicing is to be sung by God's people. We are to gather regularly and express regularly our joy in Jesus together. Psalm 32v11 says, “Be glad in the LORD and rejoice O righteous and shout for joy all you upright in heart”.

How do you hear that verse this morning? Is your mind distracted by deadlines? Does your heart ache over disappointments? Is your will sluggish in the midst of the same old things?

Does Psalm 32v11 sound unreasonable? Do you think the Bible is a bit unrealistic when it requests responses from you like “shout for joy”? This morning I'm about to preach A message titled *The Pilgrim's Joyful Shouts* knowing full well that there just might be people listening to the mp3 or sitting in this auditorium who cried last night because their marriage is a living hell or their child hates home and wants the world or they just lost their job or their parents are slowly slipping into dementia or bill paying is debilitating – people lonely in the midst of the crowd, whose inner world is noisy with guilt – frightened, bored, fidgety and now we hear – shout for joy!

Beloved, what people need today is to see the greatness of God and to feel the gladness in God in order to wait upon God - even in the midst of suffering and sorrow; pain and perplexity. My opening question is: How will this happen this morning?

<Pray>

For you to see the greatness of God and feel the gladness in God in order to wait hopefully upon God there are four things you need hear and believe from Psalm 33. Please open your Bibles to Psalm 33

The call to praise the LORD

v1-3

First, you need to hear the call to praise the LORD. You need to realize that expressions of gladness in God – vocal celebrations for joy in Jesus – are commanded. They are not merely suggested.

Take a listen as I read for us Psalm 33:1-3

Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous!

Praise befits the upright.

Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre;

make melody to him with the harp of ten strings!

Sing to him a new song;

play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

Who

v1

Righteous by faith

In response to the request in 32v11 the psalmist is somewhat of a choir director summoning his congregation to respond to the request. But who are these people who are called to praise the LORD?

In verse one we get our answer. Here we see WHO is to respond to the call to praise the LORD. “Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous”. It’s the righteous that are addressed in this psalm. They are to be glad in God. They are to shout for joy. These are the ones who when they gather together are to make much of the LORD in glad-hearted singing.

But who are the righteous? Are they the good people who keep all the good rules and therefore get God’s goodness because they are good? Is that who these people are?

The previous Psalm identifies the righteous. In Ps.32:1-2&11. We see that they aren’t sinless. They are ones that struggle with sin. They don’t have their lives completely together. But notice what they do have. They have trust in the LORD.

The righteous are people who confess their sin, hate it and trust God for forgiveness and help. Upright and righteous people aren’t sinless. No, these people are happy because their sins are forgiven and are covered (32:1-2). And their sins are covered and forgiven as a result of trusting the LORD for forgiveness and covering.

So we are to hear Ps.33 as a summons of all those whose sins are forgiven to praise the LORD.

How

v2-3

Unashamed & infectious joy

But we are not just left with an abstract command. These first 3 verses teach us how to do this - how to praise the LORD.

The scene here is noisy and joyous. The words used in v2-3 keep us from confusion over what it looks like to praise the LORD. Shout for joy – Give thanks to the LORD – make melody to him – Sing to him – play skillfully – with loud shouts...

This passage tells us that praising God is to be done by “singing a new song to him”. This “new song” isn’t so much about being novel or innovative as it is experiencing firsthand the song of deliverance. A new song responds to fresh realization of God’s deliverance. We see this in Ps.96 and 98. We come across it in Isaiah 42:10 and finally in Revelation 5:9 where this new act of deliverance is not about delivering His people from earthly problems – present distresses at home or work or school. This new song is ultimately a celebration of eternal deliverance accomplished by the Lamb who was slain for all who trust in Him. NOW when salvation by faith alone in Christ alone grips the heart unashamed and infectious joy spring forth from the lips.

When the heart believes that eternal deliverance was accomplished by Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection for ALL who trust in Him there is tangible and invincible joy expressed and heard in the gathering of the righteous.

Inhibitions are gone. Reservations are removed. Thoughts of self are swallowed up in thoughts of God. No worries over what people might think of me. Embarrassment has vanished. Verse two teaches that those whose sins are forgiven, those who are trusting God for their right relationship with Him and against whom the LORD counts no iniquity - these are they who openly express much joy in God when they are together worshipping him. This is our summons. This is the call to the righteous this morning – a call to praise the LORD.

The motivation to praise the LORD

v4-11

For you to see the greatness of God and feel the gladness in God in order to wait hopefully upon God you need something more than the call. The motivation to praise the LORD is found in v4-11. Take a listen for qualities that make the LORD the only reliable foundation for joyful trust and hope.

*For the word of the LORD is upright,
and all his work is done in faithfulness.
He loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.*

*By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
and by the breath of his mouth all their host.
He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap;
he puts the deeps in storehouses.*

*Let all the earth fear the LORD;
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!
For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.
The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
he frustrates the plans of the peoples.
The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
the plans of his heart to all generations.*

As I studied the text I noticed no less than three reasons to carry out the call in v1-3.

His perfections

v4-5

First, His perfections. Notice the LORD's character in v4-5. He keeps His word. What He says is upright. He is not One to impeach. He loves justice. His heart is perfect. His words are honest. He works are flawless. His loving kindness fills the entire earth as His heart surrounds the one who trusts in Him.

His power

v6-9

And in v6-9 we see secondly, His absolute power. Can you imagine the power that just simply by speaking creates and sustains? Notice the bookends of this stanza; v6&9.

V6: By the Word of the LORD the heavens were made.

V8: Let all the earth fear the LORD...stand in awe of Him

V9: for He spoke and it came to be

The heavens were made by just speaking them into existence? That on a clear night we look up into the sky and see just a small patch of our galaxy which contains (I'm told) millions of stars and then to remember that our galaxy is but one of 200 million+ galaxies in the universe. All this came to be by a spoken word.

– And now see the responses to His majesty found in v8 – amazement, wonder, astonishment, awe! The sheer power of the LORD motivates our praise of Him.

His purpose

v10-11

And if this is not enough fuel to ignite shouts of joy from us, notice v10-11. Against all opposing plans the LORD's plan stands! He is never thwarted. No plan against Him nor plans against His people can outdo or undo His plan for His people. This is motivation to excitedly boast in the LORD. Praise the LORD...for His perfection, His power and His purpose.

The exhortation to trust in the LORD

v12-19

Now, with the call to praise and the reasons for it behind us, the Psalmist believes it's time to exhort the kind of trust we are to have in the LORD. In v12-19 we notice the LORD is not addressing all the nations (plural). He directs His gaze upon the nation (singular); His people – the church and gives this exhortation. Take a listen as I read v12-19 for us.

*Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!
The LORD looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man;
from where he sits enthroned he looks out
on all the inhabitants of the earth,
he who fashions the hearts of them all
and observes all their deeds.
The king is not saved by his great army;
a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.
The war horse is a false hope for salvation,
and by its great might it cannot rescue.
Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him,
on those who hope in his steadfast love,
that he may deliver their soul from death
and keep them alive in famine.*

We are to obey glad heartedly this exhortation to trust in the LORD because...

The scrutiny of God

v12-15

First, v12-15 and the scrutiny of God. These verses would be sheer terror if the LORD's heart was not perfect in purpose and pure in love. He knows us thoroughly in order to protect His blessed nation of amid all the corrupt nations of v10-11. You see, He knows our hearts. He knows every detail of our days. He knows what we do and where we go. And this type of analysis creates a blessed status according to v12. We can wait upon Him. We can trust Him. We can wait with exuberant joy for Him because the data He has on each of us brings about and keeps us in a blessed standing.

The futility of man

v16-17

Secondly, we are to trust in the LORD because of the futility of man according to v16-17. Self-reliance kills joyful praise to God. Are you still with me this morning? Stop for a moment and notice the treasure in which you hope and the accomplishments in which you boast. Look at earthly foundations. Are you about to build your life on that? Trust the LORD happily because the other option is man and mankind is futile to support such a hope.

The deliverance by God

v18-19

And lastly, to see the greatness of God, to feel the gladness in God, to wait hopefully upon God requires us to believe v18-19. God's purpose and plan for "those who fear Him" is deliverance from death. We are to give up our self-reliance because of who the LORD is and what He does with His delivering power for those who stand in awe of Him and wait hopefully in His unfailing love.

The Affirmation of trust in the LORD

v20-22

As we bring this message to a close here's a reminder.

- Shout joyfully to the LORD is a command – a non-optional summons.
- This command can only be obeyed by the righteous.
- The righteous are those who trust in the LORD.
- Trust in the LORD strengthens as the righteous
 - see greatness of God...
 - feel the gladness in God...
 - wait patiently upon God.

But to recap what we've learned is not enough. To hear truth but not affirm truth is a grave mistake and leads us to hypocrisy and coldness. The Psalmist concludes his writing by speaking on behalf of all true believers. In v20-22 we come to the affirmation of trust in the LORD.

The community of faith lays claim to what the LORD has promised. Yahweh knows the hearts of those who put their trust in Him. These are the genuine believers who freely and publicly say of the LORD – You are our help! You are our shield! We will wait upon You. We will hope in You.

Let's stand together make a heart-felt affirmation to the LORD as found in v20-22

(on the screen let's read aloud in unison v20-22)

Our soul waits for the LORD;

he is our help and our shield.

For our heart is glad in him,

because we trust in his holy name.

Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us,

even as we hope in you.

Amen