

Sing Joyfully to the Lord (Psalm 33)

The psalmist calls the righteous to worship the Lord because of His character and His works. As a result, they are to put their hope and trust in the Lord.

Introduction

Ellie and I wore our 2017 Astros' World Championship T-shirts proudly as we went to the Astros' game last Tuesday. The crowd came in droves. The stadium was packed out with excited fans rooting for our Astros' team. There was electricity in the air as the starting lineup was introduced. The fans shouted and yelled as their favorite player was announced. One of the crowd favorites was Jose Altuve. Many of the fans were wearing Astros jerseys with #27, which is Jose Altuve's number. They all acknowledged him as a great player. Last year, he was the American League batting champion. I admire him because he is probably the smallest baseball player. He is 5' 6". You see, I am 5' 5". When he was introduced, everyone stood on their feet yelling at the top of their lungs. They were giving worth to Jose Altuve.

This morning, we will be studying Psalm 33, where the psalmist is calling the people to give worth to God or in other words, they were called to worship God and to praise Him. Why should we worship God? And how should we approach God as we understand who God is? Our true understanding of God will determine how we behave every day. You can follow the sermon this morning by taking out the sermon outline from your bulletin.

There are three major points to our message this morning: Call to Worship, which is followed by the Causes for Worship, and lastly, the Choice to Worship. Let us look at the first point: Call to Worship as we read vv.1-3, "Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre. Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy."

A. The Call to Worship (33:1-3)

The psalmist starts this psalm by calling the righteous to worship. Worship is simply giving worth to someone. We give worth to celebrities, movie stars, and athletes. Who is worthy of praise? Some people worship J.J. Watt. Others worship and idolize Taylor Swift. It is natural to brag and talk about one's idol all the time. They recognize all that the person has done. They want to imitate their idol. That is what worship is all about.

Instead of earthly figures, the psalmist calls us to worship God by singing joyfully to the Lord with our voices as well with instruments. Of the six sentences in the first three verses, five of them are imperatives or commands calling the readers to praise God. They are called to sing joyfully to the Lord, praise the Lord, make music to him, sing to him a new song, and play skillfully. Why should we worship God? Because it is fitting. It is the right thing to do. It should be natural to respond in this way.

In verse 3, they are to sing to him with a new song. A "new song" is a response to a "new act" of deliverance. Something new has taken place that causes one to be exuberant; we are so excited that we want to express it in a new song. It speaks of God constantly working in our lives. We should regularly respond with a shout for joy. It is like saying,

“You are awesome!” We should want to tell others of God’s awesomeness. We should be prepared to show off God every day. Do you have something you want to brag about God today? That is worship. We give worth to God. May we be aware of what God is doing in our lives every day and may we tell others of it...

[After the call to worship, the psalm goes on to explain the causes for worship. In words, why should we worship God? What are the reasons that bring us to a point of praising and glorifying him? There are five causes or reasons for worship. Let’s take a look at the first cause to worship God: we praise God for His truth, righteousness, & judgment.]

B. The Causes for Worship (33:4-22)

1. Praise God for His truth, righteousness, and judgment (33:4-5)

There are a number of characteristics of God being described here in vv. 4-5, “For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.” The better we understand who God is, the more we will worship Him. Because we know that God’s Word is right and true, we can depend on it. God provides absolute laws that will always be right; it is always true. If I follow it, then it will guide us in the right way in the long run. God is faithful in all he does. More literally, it speaks of God’s work as being trustworthy. We can count on God fulfilling his promises. Therefore, we can trust in everything that he does. We know that everything He makes is sound inside and out.

In verse 5, the psalmist describes what is most important to God. God loves righteousness and justice. Because that is true, we know that He will avenge those who are evil. Instead of me taking revenge, God said that He will take care of those that mistreat me. I should leave room for God to do so. He is fair. No one can pull wool over His eyes. Ultimately, justice will prevail. I do not take things into my own hands.

The last characteristic of God is that He displays unfailing love. This is the Hebrew word, *hesed*, which has the understanding of loyal, covenant keeping love. God is a promise-keeping God. We can count on Him because he loves us; He is committed to us and is loyal to us. That gives us a lot of security. Because God’s character is overwhelming, we are to worship Him. He is worthy of our worship.

[Let us look at the second reason why we are to worship the Lord: We praise God for His power over creation. READ vv.6-9, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; he puts the deep into storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the people of the world revere him. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.”]

2. Praise God for His power over creation (33:6-9)

Another reason why we are to worship God is because of His power over creation. Through His Word, the heavens and earth were created. By the breath of his mouth, He called everything into existence. He made everything out of nothing.

ILLUSTRATION - In 2010, a group of 25 of us took a trip up Mt. Sinai in the middle of the night with the goal of reaching the top of the mountain to witness the sunrise. We were on camels for the first couple of hours. It was a clear night with a full moon shining

down from heaven. As I gazed up in the sky, I could see thousands of stars. It was a magnificent sight. There were no street lights to cover up the brilliance of God's creation. After we reached a particular height, we had to get off our camels and walk up the mountain on foot. We joined some two hundred other people from all over the world that were walking up the same path to reach the top of Mt. Sinai. On our way up the narrow path, I met people from Romania, from Brazil, from Korea, from Nigeria. It appeared that every group from all the continents was represented. It took several more hours to reach our final destination. We arrived at 5:30 a.m. All of us waited eagerly for the sunrise. Shortly after 6 AM we saw a crack of light radiating behind the far mountains. All of a sudden, the sun emerged glowing with a glorious sight. To my surprise, a large group of us started singing How Great Thou Art without prompting. Goose pimples filled my arms as we sang with all of our hearts worshipping God and praising Him as the Creator of the universe. We were giving Him worth acknowledging His power as the designer of the world. We gave Him glory recognizing how big He is and how little we are.

That evening started as I looked at the uncountable stars, which represent a small percentage of the 200 million stars in our galaxy. Yet, it is only one of millions of galaxies that make up our universe. There are countless universes out there. The Bible tells us he formed the stars with his breath. He hung them in space, and knows each of them by their name. As vast as all that is, he also knows us by name. We ended our journey by witnessing the brilliant sunrise from God's creation. Our natural response was to bow down and worship our creator, who through His powerful Words, the universe came into being.

[We have looked at two of the causes for worship, namely, we praise Him for His character, and we praise Him for His power. Thirdly, we praise Him for His sovereignty.]

3. Praise God for His sovereignty (33:10-12)

We have not only seen God's power through His Word in His creation, but here the psalmist makes it clear that God's purpose and will stand firm regardless of opposing plans of nations around Israel. Read vv.10-12, "The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance." All that God does has a purpose and it will come to being whether we support it or not. We worship Him because He is sovereign. He is in total control. His will rule at all times.

What God plans to do will happen no matter what man tries to do. (Prov. 19:21) "Many are the plans in man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails" (Isa 46:10b) "My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about, what I have planned, that will I do." Nothing surprises our Lord. Because of His sovereignty, I can feel safe in His Hand.

Israel has a special relationship with God as God's people. God proclaims that the nation whose God is the Lord will be blessed. That is a wonderful promise from the

Lord. Those who choose to pursue God's will and follow it will be blessed. It is God who chose His people to pass along His inheritance. It is a no-brainer if we choose to adjust our will to match God's will because His will will always be accomplished. Let's choose to be on the winning side. We worship God for His sovereignty. He is worthy of our worship.

[The fourth reason we praise God because He is all-knowing. We worship God because His eyes are all-seeing. Let us read vv13-19, "From the heaven the Lord looks down and sees all mankind; from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth - he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do."]

4. Praise God for His all knowing (33:13-15)

God keeps His eyes on all mankind. There is nothing that goes on without His notice. Because God is all knowing, I can go to Him knowing that He understands what is going on when I do not have a clue.

ILLUSTRATION: My brother in-law came down with liver cancer four months ago. He knew that God is sovereign and He is all-knowing. Although he did not understand why he had a 4 ½ inch tumor, he could find comfort that God understands and He is in control. Are you in the middle of something that you do not understand? God knows and we can go confidently before Him. Because God is all-knowing, He knows me personally. We can find comfort that He understands me inside out including my feelings. He knows my needs and we can find security in our Lord.

[The final cause for worship is so that we can praise Him for His authority. Let us read vv. 16-19, "No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save. But the eyes of the Lord are on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine."]

5. Praise God for His Authority (33:16-19)

God is in charge and He will hold all nations accountable to His righteous standards. It does not matter how big your army is or how strong you claim you are. No one is able to stand against God.

ILLUSTRATION: In Exodus, God delivered the children of Israel from the hands of the Egyptians. After the 10 plagues, Pharaoh allowed the Israelites leave to go back to their own country. Shortly after they left, Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his chariots to bring them back. Egypt was recognized as having the greatest army at that time. However, God stepped in. He parted the Red Sea with His mighty power. The children of Israel placed their hope in the Lord and God rescued them. When God's people finished crossing the Red Sea, God made the parted waters to fill up the Red Sea again. God exerted his authority over the sea and destroyed the powerful Egyptian army. May we fear the Lord as we place our trust and hope in the power of Yahweh rather than human power. Superior numbers do not challenge the power of God. His will will rule at the end.

In summary, the psalmist called us to worship Him. He gives five causes or reasons why we are to worship our Lord. We all praise Him for His character, His power, His sovereignty, His all knowing, and His authority. The more we know God, the more we understand how small we are and how big God is and how much we need Him. That leads us to the final section: The Choice to Worship. Because of who God is and what He has done, we can choose to worship Him. May we wait in hope and to trust in Him. Let us read vv. 20-22, “We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in you.”

C. The Choice to Worship (33:20-22)

1. We wait in hope
2. We trust in Him

God concludes this section by giving a bold promise. Those who fear Him and put their hope in His unfailing love, God will deliver them. Those who fear God are at awe in the Lord and see how big God is. Therefore, they are willing to give up their self-reliance to be totally reliant upon the Lord. Even though we are in deep trouble, God has the power to deliver us out of our crisis. Just as we learned last week, God is our Refuge and Fortress. Although he might not deliver us every time, we can be assured that God will be there for us. We know that He loves us and has the best for us even though we might not understand. He is our help and our shield.

ILLUSTRATION: Although my brother-in-law’s health was not doing well, my sister placed her hope in the Lord. When people ask her how she is doing, she said, “Things are not good, but God is good and my faith is not shattered.” A couple of weeks ago, my brother in-law went home to be with the Lord. Our hearts are heavy and broken, but we know that my brother in-law is in heaven with the Lord because he has placed his personal faith in Jesus Christ. There are times that things do not work out as we plan. But God assures us that He is there with us. Our family is at peace knowing that we will see him again. He is worshipping the Lord now.

We are only here on earth for a temporary dwelling. We are created to worship God. Our time on earth is only a dress rehearsal of the real thing, where we will worship the Lord forever. We can find our hope in our Lord.