

Series: Pathway Through the Psalms

A MINISTRY THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE PSALMS 96

Text:

Introduction:

I recently heard of a book and on its cover read this statement: The early church had the power to turn the world upside down. Now it's your turn.

What a challenge!

My desire as a pastor is to have such a church. I want to see God's power reaching people, changing lives, and literally turning our community upside down for Jesus Christ.

We read in Jude 1:22:

Jude 1:22

²² And of some have compassion, making a difference:

I want to see marriages spared from the divorce court.

I want to see teenagers protected from the destructive forces of drugs and alcohol.

I want to reach little children before their lives are ruined by the sins of our age.

I want to put the hope of heaven in people's hearts and see the light of Jesus shining in their eyes.

I want to be a part of healing hurts and meeting needs by introducing others to grace of Jesus Christ.

I believe that God wants to do these kinds of works through a body of believers.

But they don't happen automatically.

A ministry must have certain qualities before it will begin to make a difference in the lives of others.

Four of those qualities are found in this psalm.

1. AN EXPERIENCE OF JOY – (vs. 1-2)

Psalm 96:1-2

¹ O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth. ² Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.

God's people should be a joyful people.

We spend too much time thinking that life would be more enjoyable if we only had certain things.

- More money
- More friends
- More freedom
- A different job
- Fewer problems

A newer car, a bigger home, better clothes ...

If you have Jesus, you have the greatest possession God has to give.

Why then are we looking to lesser things to give us joy?

Why do we allow the cares of this world to drive the joy of heaven from our hearts?

Our joy is to be expressed in a "new song."

This word "new" also means "fresh" or "recent."

It's not that the words have never been sung, but that they are sung from a heart that has had:

A recent encounter with God

A new appreciation of God's person or work

A fresh experience of God's grace, power, love, etc.

In the little book of Lamentations, Jeremiah wrote, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning."

Our joy resounds with authenticity when it springs from a fresh, daily experience of God's compassionate work in our lives.

It is that quality of joy that convinces others that God is real and makes Him attractive to a hurting world.

We see the importance of "An Experience of Joy" but also

2. AN EMPHASIS ON EVANGELISM – (VS. 2-6)

Psalm 96:2-6

² Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. ³ Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. ⁴ For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. ⁵ For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens. ⁶ Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

We are to witness with our lives. "Shew forth His salvation ..."

People need to see that a relationship to Christ has made a difference in our lives.

The Bible describes salvation as a new birth. It tells us that we become new creatures.

When you trusted Christ as your Savior, you got a brand new start in life; you became something that you were not before – A Christian.

As Christians, we are called to display a lifestyle with certain distinctives.

There were five "new" things demonstrated in the early church that allowed them to turn their world upside down.

- A new identity

They knew they were Christians, saints of God, called to be distinct from the world.

- A new choice

They knew that they must choose to experience godliness on a personal level.

- A new master

They knew that the Lordship of Christ was not optional.

- A new power

They knew that the Holy Spirit resided within them, imparting godly character and empowering them for Christian service.

- A new community

They knew that they were a part of a body of believers; that they were designed to thrive in the environment of a local congregation. A common faith and purpose connected them.

When we demonstrate these truths in our lives, then we will turn our world upside down for Jesus Christ and have a ministry that makes a difference.

We are to witness with our lips. "Declare His glory..."

Our faith must not only be seen, it must also be shared.

Romans 10:17

¹⁷ So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:4

⁴ But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

Every Christian is called to be a personal evangelist.

Can we be content to sit in our pews, sing our songs, but not tell others about the Savior?

We see the importance of “An Experience of Joy” and “An Emphasis on Evangelism” but also

3. AN EXPRESSION OF PERSONAL COMMITMENT – (VS. 7-9)

Psalm 96:7-9

*⁷ **Give** unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, **give** unto the LORD glory and strength. ⁸ **Give** unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. ⁹ O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.*

Three times the psalmist tells us to GIVE.

Giving is an expression of commitment.

Our lives reflect the values of the things to which we are committed.

The Psalmist mentions four things that we are to give to the Lord as an expression of our commitment to Him.

- "We Are to Give Glory"

This speaks of giving God the place of PRIORITY in your life.

It means that everything you have and everything you are has been dedicated to him.

You have placed nothing above Him in your life.

It has been illustrated in this way:

A man enters a Jewelry store and finds the most beautiful diamond he has ever seen.

He asks the owner the cost of this priceless gem. The owner replies, "Oh, it's very expensive."

"Exactly how much is it?"

"I want to know if I can afford it."

"Oh, anybody can afford it, but few are willing to pay the price."

"Well, how much will it cost me?" the man asks.

"Everything you have."

The man thinks it over. He gazes at the diamond.

Finally, he decides that it is worth everything he has. He agrees to buy it.

So the owner pulls out a note pad and says, "Okay. Let's make a list of what you have. How much is in your bank account?"

"About \$10,000."

The owner writes down the amount.

"In your wallet?" "Sixty-three dollars."

"In you pocket?"

"Twenty-six cents ,,, but you have to leave me a little something to put gas in my car."

"Let's see," says the owner. "That's \$63.26 and one car."

"You're going to take my car?"

How will I get home?"

"Oh, you own a home."

He adds one home to the list.

"Wait a second, if you take my home, my family and I will have to live in our camper. It would be awfully cramped."

The owner writes down, "one camper."

He then asks, "How many are there in your family?"

Writes, "wife, son, and 2 daughters."

The man is really sweating now.

"Listen, if you take all that. I won't have anything left in the world. I'll come completely alone!"

"That's okay," replied the owner, "because you have to give yourself, too."

"I told you it was expensive, but that is the value of this diamond.

But here is how it works. You sign all these things over to me.

They become mine.

However, I will let you go on using them.

I only require that you manage them in a way that will please and honor me.

If I should ever ask for them, you must surrender them immediately."

Salvation is free to us. But if we want to give glory to God through our lives, it will cost us everything we have.

All must be surrendered to Him.

Paul put it like this, "Whether therefore ye eat, or ye drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

- "We Are to Give Strength"

To give God our strength means that we use our lives in His service.

Christians are not meant to be spectators of the ministry, but participants in the ministry.

Whatever gifts and talents we have are to be used in serving God, ministering to our church family, and building up this local body.

- "We Are to Give An Offering"

When we give financially, we:

- Demonstrate our commitment to God's work and His people
- Declare God's Ownership over all we possess
- "We Are to Give Worship"

Worship is the act of humbling ourselves before the might and majesty of God.

It means that for a time, our thoughts are completely occupied with the Person of God and our hearts are completely yielded to Him.

The world will stand up and take notice of this kind of wholehearted commitment to Jesus Christ. It sets the stage for ministry that makes a difference.

We see the importance of "An Experience of Joy", "An Emphasis on Evangelism" and "An Expression of Personal Commitment" but also

4. AN EXPECTATION FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST – (VS. 10-13)

Psalm 96:10-13

¹⁰ Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously. ¹¹ Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. ¹² Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice ¹³ Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

The psalm ends with a four-fold anticipation of celebration.

- LET the heavens rejoice.
- LET the earth be glad.
- LET the sea roar.
- LET the field be joyful.

The psalmist addresses God's creation and tells it to "cut loose," to pull out all the stops and unleash the fullness of its joy.

WHY?

Because the Lord is coming!

The coming of Christ is our "blessed hope."

It is a hope that makes us happy!

We should live every day with the expectation that at any moment, the Lord Jesus could rise from His place at His Father's right hand and come to lead His brothers and sisters home.

The conviction that this world is not our home – we're just here on temporary assignment, and at any moment the Captain of our Salvation could call us home – is a powerful motivation towards ministry that makes a difference.

It gives us a sense of urgency, realizing that our opportunity of ministry could come to an end at any moment.

Close:

We can have a ministry that makes a difference, but it begins with a personal decision by each one of us to accept that challenge.

To keep our relationship fresh

To be personal witnesses for Christ with life and lips

To have a whole-hearted commitment to Christ

To live by eternal values with an eye to the sky, your ear tuned for the sound of the trumpet.