

Praising God All Day Long  
Psalm 100

November 24, 2002  
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Happiness is.... Well, how would you define it? The playpen philosopher, *Marvin*, says, "Happiness is a diaper fresh from the dryer on a cold morning." Author Robert Fulghum says, "Happiness is a big box of crayons, the kind with the sharpener built in." *Ziggy* says, "I wish I knew the secret to happiness. I would tell everybody I know." Writer John Powell says, "Happiness is an inside job." The Westminster Confession says, "To be happy is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." The author of Psalm 100 says, "*Happiness is a chance to be in the house of the Lord.*" Today, let us enter God's gates with thanksgiving in our hearts. Let us come into God's presence with praise.

GOD IS GOOD, ALL THE TIME.

God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good. Would you consider the goodness of God with me for just a few moments?

God made us. Verse 3: "*Know that the Lord who made us is God. It is He who made us, not we ourselves.*" Think about that. Know that the Lord who made us is God.

Snoopy, sitting outside at night talking to the moon, says, "Sometimes I wonder how did I get here?" The moon replies, "Well, I like to think I came up the hard way." Many of us think that we came up the hard way. Many of us think that we have made it on our own, done it our way. We are self-made, I did it my way, kind of people.

In the movie Shenandoah, Jimmie Stewart plays the role of a prosperous Quaker farmer during the Civil War. He is a widower and hard worker. At supper his feelings show as he offers this prayer: "Bless this food Lord. I plowed the land, planted the seed and irrigated the fields. I harvested the crops, canned it, cooked it, and served it. It took a lot of work and I did it all. But thank you anyway because I promised my wife on her deathbed I would, for the children's sake. Amen."

I suspect that some of us have prayed that prayer, haven't we? There is a lot to be said for hard work, self determination, taking what you want and paying for it. Take it from one who had to learn the hard way. It is better to do it God's way.

Some of us think we are chance made. Out of millions of sperm, one happens to burrow into a fertile egg to form my DNA that develops into a fetus that becomes a child. Life is a matter of genetics. Is that all there is? If that's all there is my friends, then let's keep dancing. Let's live loose, party hard, gamble big, stay

busy—for tomorrow we die, if that’s all there is.

The writer of this old 100th Psalm understood it better. *“Know that the Lord who made us is God.”* ‘I have called you by name from the very beginning. I have molded you in the depths of the earth and knitted you together in your mother’s womb. I have carved you into the palms of my hands and hidden you in the shadow of my embrace. I have counted every hair on your head and guided your every step. All that you are or ever hope to be, you owe it all to Me.’ It is a powerful experience to know that you are God made.

Alex Haley, author of Roots, used to keep a portrait of a turtle sitting on a fence post in his office. When asked why it was there, he would say, “Every time I write something significant, every time I read my words and think they are wonderful and begin to feel proud of myself, I look at that turtle and remember that he didn’t get there on his own. He had some help.” We are God made.

We are God claimed. Look at the rest of Verse 3. *“Know that the Lord who made us is God. We are the Lord’s. We are the people of God, the sheep of God’s pasture.”* God not only made you. God claimed you. You are His. Who owns you?

Tennessee Ernie Ford made a lot of money singing a ballad about a coal miner who dug sixteen tons of coal only to find himself another day older and deeper in debt. You remember the refrain of that song. It will date us all. *“St. Peter don’t you call me for I can’t go—I owe my soul to the company store.”*

The head football coach of the Michigan Wolverines was searching for a catchy slogan to inspire his players during a miserable spring practice. Finally he posted this notice on the locker room bulletin board in big letters: **THOSE WHO STAY WILL BE CHAMPIONS.** Some disgruntled player added these words underneath “and those who don’t will be doctors, lawyers, and CEO’s.” Have you sold your soul to the company store? Have you surrendered your life to some earthly game? Does some addiction control you?

What is your price? Is there a price on your head today? Three fans at a sell-out football game wanted in the stadium so badly that they decided to bribe the gatekeeper. “Would you let us in for a \$10 tip?” “No way,” said the gatekeeper. “Would you look the other way for a \$100 tip?” “You guys are crazy,” replied the gatekeeper. “For a \$1,000, would you just let us slip on by?” That is when the gatekeeper said, “Get out of here, guys, you are getting way too close to my price!” Is there a price on your head?

‘Twas battered and scared and the auctioneer thought it scarcely worth his while to waste much time on the old violin, so he held it up with a smile. “What am I bid good folk?” he cried. “Who’ll start the bidding for me? A dollar, a dollar, and who’ll make it two, two dollars and who’ll make it three? Going for three.” But no, from the room far back, a gray haired man came forward and picked up the bow. Then wiping the dust from the old violin, tightening the loosened strings,

played a melody that was pure and sweet as a caroling angel sings.

The music stopped and the auctioneer in a voice that was quiet and low said, “Now what are my bids for the old violin?” and he held it up with the bow. “A \$1,000 and who’ll make it two, \$2,000 and who will make it three? \$3,000 once, \$3,000 twice, going and gone,” he cried. The people cheered and some of them sighed, “What changed its worth?” Quick came the reply, “The touch of the master’s hand.”

And many a person with life out of tune and battered and scarred by sin, is auctioned cheap to a thoughtless crowd, much like the old violin. A joint of pot, a glass of wine, a game—he travels on. He’s going once; he’s going twice; he’s going; he’s almost gone, but the Master comes and the foolish crowd never can quite understand, the worth of a soul or the change that’s wrought by the touch of the Master’s hand.’ We are God’s people.

Let us never forget. We have been bought with a price. We are redeemed by the blood of the crucified One. According to the dictionary, to redeem is to regain possession of. We belong to God. We are His.

**ALL THE TIME, GOD IS GOOD.**

**ALL** the time. **ALL** the time. Do you believe that? Oh, that God is good sometimes, I guess all of us would buy into that, but what is this **ALL** the time? Verse 5, “*For the Lord is good, God’s steadfast love endures forever.*” When the storms of life are raging, *His steadfast love endures forever.* When all that is nailed down seems to be coming loose, *His steadfast love endures forever.* When bombs are bursting in the air, *His steadfast love endures forever.* When you walk through the valleys of shadows of death and you wonder how you can carry on, *His steadfast love endures forever.*

If you think about it, every national declaration of thanksgiving was made in the hard times, not the good times. In 1621 the Pilgrims gave thanks at Plymouth Rock, after half of them starved to death over the winter. The rest of them would have died had it not been for some sympathetic and kind Native Americans who came to take care of them. In 1789 George Washington issued a decree of thanksgiving after he had led this country in the bloody battles of the Revolutionary War. Abraham Lincoln called on us to give thanks in 1863 while families fought against families in the Civil War. FDR made the last Thursday of November a legal holiday in the midst of the Second World War. What is this all about? When things are awful, hard, difficult, painful—STOP. As a country, it is time to give thanks.

It seems to me that most of the really grateful people that I know are not the people who have had it made. The really grateful people are the ones who have walked through the valleys of the shadows and the pain of life. They are the people who have touched bottom and discovered the bottom is sound and

because it is sound they have a reason to give thanks. They have found *the steadfast love of the Lord endures forever*.

May 2001 Martin Burnham and his wife Gracia, missionaries on the Philippine Island of Palawan, were abducted by terrorists. For three hundred seventy-six days they were held hostage. Just before the Philippine military made a raid, Martin and Gracia hovered together in a hammock under a makeshift tent and seeking to find comfort in that tragedy, prayed. Martin turned to his wife and quoted the 100th Psalm, “The Bible says to serve the Lord with gladness. Let’s go out serving him with gladness.” As they hugged one another they began singing hymns and praying. The bullets started flying; one bullet hit Gracia’s leg—she survived. Another hit Martin’s chest—he died. Either way, both insisted on singing of God’s steadfast love that lasts forever and forever.

Read Verse 5 with me. *“For the Lord is good. God’s steadfast love endures forever and his faithfulness to all generations.”* Think about that for a moment. God’s faithfulness endures from generation to generation to generation.

I remember reading something Norman Vincent Peale wrote at the end of his life about the influence of his father who was a Methodist preacher in Ohio. He studied long, worked hard, and loved people. Norman said, “One day when I was just a little kid, I saw my father sitting on a curb in Columbus, Ohio sobbing. I asked him, ‘Dad, what is wrong?’ My dad said, ‘I’ve been out visiting people and the sorrows and troubles break my heart and I just needed to talk to the Lord about it.’ Norman Vincent Peale said, ‘That day I knew I wanted to care for people like my father cared for people.’ When I was preparing my first sermon I went to my daddy and I asked him, ‘What should I say?’ My father said, ‘Don’t try to show off. Don’t try to make people think that you know something. Just tell them that God loves them and that will be enough.’”

From generation to generation to generation, faithfulness is there. On a day like today, I just want to serve the Lord with gladness. I just want to come into His presence with singing. I just want to remember that I belong to God and that is all that really matters. If I were an artist, I would offer Him a painting. If I were an architect, I would build Him a beautiful sanctuary like this one. If I were a poet, I would write Him a poem. If I were a musician, I would sing Him a song. Since I am who I am, I will just say, “Thank you Jesus. You have been a bridge over troubled water; You have been a rock in a weary land; You have been a shelter in the time of storm. Thank you Jesus.”

**GOD IS GOOD, ALL THE TIME. ALL THE TIME, GOD IS GOOD. THANKS BE TO GOD. Amen.**















