

**Introduction:** The Psalm this morning is designated to be a ‘thank offering’ given by God’s people to Him. It is in two parts that are similar but different. Together they describe a relationship between God and His covenant people of increasing nearness and intimacy. \*\*\* This song is a musical diptych, similar to artistic diptychs. A diptych is two related paintings done on wood and joined together with hinges to display on an altar of worship to God. A ‘Google’ search will turn up some diptychs from the Middle Ages, including the one from 1435 AD in the *Bulletin Insert* this morning of both Jesus’ Crucifixion and His Last Judgment. \*\*\* This short song of thanksgiving, as sung in the Temple, had only twelve lines of thirty six total words. Yet it is extremely rich in its portrayal of all Yahweh IS and all He does as The Creator who shepherds His people to keep them near Him. The two parts are joined together on the hinge of His loving care for His people from every corner of the earth – now fulfilled in His Son, The Savior King. \*\*\* In the first word picture, His people are exhorted to shout and worship as they come to Him because He is THE God who has made them and they are His. In the second word picture, His people are exhorted to intimacy with Him through thanksgiving and praise because He is good, and His LOVE and Truth are eternal. \*\*\* Side-by-side these poetic pictures express truths that, when combined, give an inspired perfect portrait of The Covenant God, Yahweh. God’s people are to both come to Him and be intimate with Him because they are the sheep of a Shepherd who is eternally LOVE and Truth. \*\*\* As we go through this worship song, sung by God’s people more than five hundred years before Jesus came to earth as The Son of Man, we will see how Jesus fulfilled all this Psalm says about God. He is The Shepherd of Yahweh’s sheep. He demonstrated God’s LOVE on The Cross and in His Resurrection.

**I. God’s people exhort all the earth to serve Yahweh with joy because of His deeds. (Verses 1-3)**

A. Through joyful service of Yahweh, anyone may come to Him. (Verses 1-2)

1. Shout joyfully to Yahweh all the earth. (Verse 1)

**Triumph:** Literally this is a battle cry of triumph over an enemy! With the completion of God’s revelation of His Word, all who follow Jesus in humble surrendered obedient faith, know He triumphed over sin and death on The Cross (*Colossians 2:13-15*); and, because He rose from the dead, He will return to rule all He created (*1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Revelation 2:26-27; 19:11-21*)

**Invitation:** The invitation to joyfully join Yahweh in His triumph over sin and death is universal – for all who live on the earth. God is not willing for any to die, but that everyone would turn from himself to God IN Jesus to have life. (*2 Peter 3:8-9*)

2. Serve Yahweh with gladness. (Verse 2a)

**Jesus:** Jesus said He came to serve others as an example (*Mark 10:44-45*) to enable people to serve God as His priests as Yahweh proclaimed is His will for all His people (*Exodus 19:3-6*).

**Joy:** It is not drudgery to serve Yahweh in whole-hearted worship, rather worship is joyful thanksgiving!

**Thankful people serve Yahweh with joy**

3. Come to His presence in singing. (Verse 2b)

**His Face:** Presence interprets ‘to His Face’, a common way to express the blessing of the covenant relationship with Yahweh. The high priest put Yahweh’s blessing on His people with these words: ‘May Yahweh bless you and keep you. May Yahweh let His Face shine on you and be gracious to you. May Yahweh show you His Face and bring you peace.’ (*Numbers 6:24-26*, NJB – every instance of ‘you’ is an expression of the people as one.)

In the presence of Yahweh is both grace and peace.

**Ringling singing:** The word for singing means a ringing cry of joy. We might say it is ringing singing.

B. Yahweh is THE God who created everyone to follow Him. (Verse 3)

1. Know because Yahweh, He IS God. (Verse 3a)

**Know:** This is knowledge gained through experience in an intimate relationship. It is often used of the knowledge a husband and wife share that results in new life.

**THE God:** In a world with many ‘gods’ and idols, all must know there IS only ONE all-powerful, supreme and ONLY sovereign God – Yahweh: THE God.

2. He made us, to Him we are [or not us]. (Verse 3b)

**Creator:** Yahweh wants all people to know that, in an instant, He made everything out of nothing. All that is, especially people, came about because of His intentional creation. People are not the result of a meaningless, random, chaotic process! And because of this, human life is precious to Yahweh. The modern, and post-modern, world has lost all respect for human life because it has accepted the lie that people are not the result of God’s planned creation flowing from His awesome strong LOVE.

**Not us-to Him:** The written Word is: He made us, **not** us [or we ourselves]. Again, as a result of denying God’s role in making people, there is the lie of the ‘self-made man’. Or, as cynics say, God created man in His image; and, ever since men have returned the favor [remaking God in their image]!

But, to the worshipping people, the priests spoke this Word: He made us **to Him**.

3. [We are] His people, the sheep of His pasture. (Verse 3c)

**His people:** This is Yahweh’s desire: His people follow Him as sheep follow a shepherd.

**Jesus THE Good Shepherd:** Jesus described this relationship with this figure of speech (parable). Sheep follow their shepherd because they know his voice. They will flee from a stranger because they do not know his voice. Then Jesus said: I AM The Good Shepherd who gives His life for His sheep. Others are thieves and robbers come to steal, kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life and have [life] to the full. I know My sheep and they shall hear My voice and be one, including other sheep I will also bring. I have power to lay down My life and take it up again. (John 10:1-18)

**Exhortation:** May we all thank God for creating us and leading us as the sheep of His flock.

## **II. God's people exhort everyone to intimacy with Yahweh through thanksgiving for His eternal steadfast LOVE and Truth. (Verses 4-5)**

A. Thanksgiving and praise bring people close to Yahweh. (Verse 4)

1. Enter His gates in thanksgiving. (Verse 4a)

**Gates:** These gates led into the courts of God's house. God's people joyfully worship Him by entering the gates to where He dwells by service to Him with thanksgiving.

### **Thankful people serve Yahweh with joy**

2. (And enter) His courts in praise. (Verse 4b)

**Intimacy:** Praise is how people respond to the worthy deeds of Yahweh. There were two courts in the Temple built by Solomon according to His father's instructions given to him by Yahweh. The general court was for all people and the inner court had the Temple itself. Praise brings people to the door through which the priest entered to see The Face of Yahweh. Face-to-face intimacy with The Covenant God!

3. Give thanks to Him; bless His Name. (Verse 4c)

**Bless:** When near to Yahweh, people thank Him again. Then they bless God by adoring Him on bended knees because of His power and majesty. People who do this enjoy intimacy with God, the greatest of all the blessings of His covenant.

**Exhortation:** May we all seek a deeper intimacy with God expressed through our giving of thanks as we humbly bow before Him and serve Him with joy because He is The King of the universe!

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B. Yahweh's strong LOVE and ongoing Truth reveal His goodness. (Verse 5)

1. Because Yahweh (is) good. (Verses 5a)

**General statement:** Ten other times in Scripture Yahweh is to be thanked, praised or worshipped because He is good.

(1 Chronicles 16:34 | Psalm 106:1; 2 Chronicles 7:3; Ezra 3:11; Psalm 107:1; 118:1, 29; 135:3; 136:1; Jeremiah 33:11)

2. Because to eternity strong LOVE of Him. (Verse 5b)

**Eternal LOVE:** The LOVE of Yahweh is holy and strong. It is so strong that He died for the sins of all people who will turn from their sins, humbly confess these to The Savior, die with Him on His Cross to receive the gift of The Holy Spirit who gives them power to faithfully obey the commandments He has given in His Word. This LOVE is never changing and eternal. David proclaimed both His goodness and strong LOVE would pursue him all the days of his life. (Psalm 23:6)

3. And, until generation and generation Truth of Him. (Verse 5c)

**Truth:** The priest who wrote the Psalm of tribute to God's Word restated the conclusion of this thanksgiving Psalm:

'The sum of Thy Word is Truth, And every one of Thy righteous ordinances is everlasting' (Psalm 119:160).

The Word of Truth brings forth children to The Father as His first fruit (James 1:17-18). The Gospel is The Word of Truth that produces fruit and love in God's people so they bear fruit for God because they have heard The Word of Truth in order to understand His grace (Colossians 1:3-6). And The Word of Truth makes children of The Father to be holy (John 17:17).

Yahweh is faithful to do all that is in His Word of Truth. And His Son is The Truth (John 14:1-6).

**Application:** Because we have considered this thanksgiving song together, may we always praise and thank God for His good character summarized by His eternal LOVE and Truth. (This is much easier said than done.)

*God is goodness, LOVE and Truth*

**Conclusion:** All the earth is invited to come before Yahweh to serve Him with joy, knowing He made them to be His sheep; and, they are also invited to a deeper face-to-face intimacy with The Covenant God by thanksgiving and blessing because He is eternal LOVE and Truth.

**Thankful people serve Yahweh with joy**