

Theme: True prayer and worship require a living faith that makes time to hear from God and respond in trust and obedience regardless of the current circumstances.

I. Intro - So Glad to Be Back!

- A. Thanks to all the men who have taught!
- B. Thanks to the congregation for stepping up to care for one another!
- C. Thanks again for the great gifts you gave us - it was a HUGE blessing! But we are glad to be back home with our congregation!
- D. We did a LOT of travel and saw some amazing and beautiful things! It was a special treat and privilege!
- E. Ancient Israelites traveled to go to the Temple to worship - it was a special treat and privilege for them!
- F. Many Psalms were used as they traveled and as they came to the Temple - Psalm 95 is one of those

II. The Call To Worship

- A. God calls His people to worship
Come, let us **sing** for joy to the Lord; let us **shout aloud** to the Rock of our salvation. ² Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with **music** and **song**.
Psalm 95:1–2
 - 1. God's people are called to worship Him in **song**
 - 2. This is to be exuberant singing - **shout aloud!**
 - 3. The people of God were being called to worship their God!
- B. The command to worship

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. ² Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.
Psalm 95:1–2

- 1. Come - not a suggestion, an option, or for those who like singing - it is a **COMMAND** for **ALL** believers!
- 2. This text is often used as a call to worship in churches even today
- 3. Each week we are called to gather as God's people and to sing worship to our God
- 4. This is a **COMMAND** - and a **PRIVILEGE** and **JOY!**

III. The Basis for Worship

- A. We worship God as the Creator King
For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods. ⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. ⁵ The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. Ps 95:3–5
 - 1. We worship the One Who made land and sea (v5)
 - 2. The Creator rules and owns creation (v4)
 - a. The Creator owns His creation (belongs)
 - b. The Creator still rules over creation - it is in His hand and never outside of His control
 - c. This is true of all creation - from the depths to the heights (merism)
 - 3. The **LORD** is King over all the 'gods' (v3)
 - a. Other nations think their 'gods' rule pieces of creation - but the **LORD** rules over everything, including them!

- b. The people surrounding Israel said that nature was its own god, or that their gods ruled over various places, but Israel was called to worship the One Who truly ruled over everything.
- c. Today we are surrounded by people who believe that nature, technology, humanity, or political leaders have ultimate authority, but Jesus still rules over all!

B. We worship God as our Redeemer King

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;⁷ for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Psalm 95:6–7a

1. We have a second reason to worship
2. We do not worship a generic God - we worship the LORD, Yahweh our covenant God
 - a. The LORD is the Great God (v3)
 - b. We kneel before the LORD our maker (v6)
3. The LORD is our Maker - the One Who has created us as His people
 - a. Not just our Maker as in Creator of everything
 - b. He is the One Who has made us to be His people
 - c. We are the people of His pasture, His flock
4. We are not called to worship a generic, vague deity, but Yahweh our Covenant God
5. We are not called to worship Yahweh only as our Creator, but especially as our Redeemer!

C. We worship God as our Shepherd Who cares for us

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;⁷ for he is our God and **we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.** Psalm 95:6–7a

1. Worship is a reminder that God is our Shepherd and that He cares for us as His flock
2. Worship is an expression of faith that God cares for us - no matter the circumstances!

IV. The Call To Living Faith

A. A sudden turn in the Psalm!

Today, if you hear his voice,⁸ do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah... Psalm 95:7b–8

1. A sudden turn in the middle of v7 (poor choice of versification by the monks!)
2. It seems so abrupt! What is happening?

B. The necessity of living faith

Today, if you hear his voice, Psalm 95:7

1. They must have faith and worship TODAY
2. They must hear God their Shepherd's voice speaking TODAY
3. True faith is nourished by God's actions in the past but it must always be alive and active through hearing and heeding God's Word in the present.

C. The danger: hardening of the heart

Today, if you hear his voice,⁸ do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert,⁹ where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did.¹⁰ For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways."¹¹ So I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest." Psalm 95:7–11

1. There is a danger that our hearts are hardened so that we do not have a living faith that worships God

2. The writer gives an example from Israel's history at Meribah (quarreling) and Massah (testing)

a. These were part of Israel's wilderness wanderings

b. You can read about it in Exodus 17:1-7

The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ² So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?" ³ But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?" ⁴ Then Moses cried out to the Lord, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." ⁵ The Lord answered Moses, "Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the Lord saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?" Exodus 17:1-7

1. These people had been redeemed by Yahweh
2. They had experienced His power and His care, but their current circumstances were overshadowing all God had done so that they doubted, quarreled, and tested the LORD.
3. God had Moses strike the Rock to meet the people's need - but the people had sinned in their response to the circumstances.

4. In Numbers 20 they are right back at the same spot - and fail the test again! And God again provides through the Rock.

c. The Psalmist is warning them to trust God the Rock in the midst of their circumstances and need

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation... ⁸ do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert, Psalm 95:1, 8

1. The people believed their circumstances more than God and thus they put Him to the test instead of worshipping Him - twice at the same spot!
2. So the Psalmist says to his own generation "Trust God your Rock Who will provide in the midst of your desert!"
3. See After Hours for more on Jesus as the Rock in these passages.

V. Applying the Word

A. Do I see living faith is required for true worship and prayer?

1. Psalm 95 begins with the call to worship
2. It gives the basis for worship - God is our Creator and Redeemer/Shepherd
3. But it presses the need for living faith - responding to God's voice TODAY
4. True prayer and worship require a living faith that takes time to hear from God and respond in trust and obedience regardless of the current circumstances.
5. Are my circumstances eclipsing my faith in God's Sovereign care for me as His sheep?

6. Am I cultivating a faith that is alive?

- a. Do I take time to hear God's voice TODAY?
- b. Am I in vital fellowship with other believers so we can encourage each other?

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. ¹⁴ We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. ¹⁵ As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." Hebrews 3:13-15

1. The writer to the Hebrews is teaching Psalm 95
 2. His "applying the Word" - daily fellowship to encourage one another
 3. Am I applying this Word?
- c. Am I gathering with God's people to receive food and drink from Christ my Rock?

B. Communion - and All the Way My Savior Leads Me

1. Anne leads us in "All the Way My Savior Leads Me"
2. Sing & pay attention to the lyrics - stir up living faith!
3. Fed by our Rock and Shepherd

A Living Faith

Psalm 95

August 14, 2022

Communion & All the Way My Savior Leads Me

Ephesians 1:17-19

Teaching keywords: Faith; worship; thanksgiving; remembrance; testing and trial; prayer

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, ¹⁸ so that you may know him better having the eyes of your heart enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. (Ephesians 1:17-19)

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. ² Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. ³For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods. ⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. ⁵ The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. ⁶Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; ⁷ for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert, ⁹ where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did. ¹⁰ For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways." ¹¹ So I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest." Psalm 95