



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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November 22, 2012
Thanksgiving Worship
Sermon Text: [Psalm 100](#)
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [James 1:16-18](#)
Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 100](#)
Second Lesson: [Luke 17:11-19](#)

Shout for Joy; the Lord is Good and His Love Endures Forever

Grace, mercy and peace are yours from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, dear fellow redeemed:

Shout for joy it says. Do you ever notice how often, in our society at least, when we shout for joy, it's often shouting for escapist joy? What in the world does that mean? Well, when is the last time you jumped out of your chair, out of your seat, raised your hands and shouted. I know it wasn't in one of these worship services. I've never seen it, and I'm not asking you to do it. It was probably at a Packer game or some sports game, maybe even at a game in our gym while watching our children play, where we live vicariously for awhile through watching someone else play sports. We get all riled up and wired and fired up and we shout for joy as though we were the one that just scored the touch down or made the basket. I guess that's kind of what I mean by escapist joy. There's nothing wrong with it. I'm not saying it's bad. I'm just saying that quite often when we really let loose and shout for joy, that's where it is because we are escaping a reality that we are maybe living in.

Maybe you've been to a movie once at the movie theater and you watch the movie. You go there to escape from reality for a couple hours, to live vicariously through the images you see on the screen, to be entertained, to forget about your problems. Maybe you've been there once when at the end of it the movie was so moving people cheered, hollered and whooped and what not. That kind of sends a chill up your spine at the end of it when someone is shouting for joy in a situation like that, if you've ever experienced it.

I think there is some truth that maybe some of the time a lot of our shouting for joy comes from escapist joy because face it, there are a lot of things in life that we don't sit around the table today and give thanks for. We have struggles. We have problems. We have difficulties. We have things that we want to escape from and not think about for awhile because thinking about it is just wearing us down. So those escapist moments relieve us from facing that reality.

Again, there's nothing wrong with that, but I think it's kind of fascinating to see when the Psalmist here tells us to shout for joy, he isn't telling us to do it as an escape from reality. He's telling us to shout for joy because he wants us to focus on a reality, a truth

that is there that maybe you and I forget when we look at some of the things that weigh us down. He tells us to shout for joy, to worship the Lord, to enter his gates with thanksgiving, to give thanks, to praise his name. There are a lot of commands in this section, but they are all based on one truth, a reality that affects you and me every day of our lives. The reason to shout for joy, the reason to worship the Lord, the reason to come before him, the reason to enter his gates, the reason to give thanks and praise his name is the last verse... *“For the LORD is good and his love endures forever.”*

This is a reality you and I live with every day when we lay our head on the pillow at the end of the night and every day when we lift it up off of the pillow. The Lord is good, his love endures forever. I don't care what the rest of your reality might be. If this year as you sit around the table today you've got all kinds of wonderful things to give thanks for... restored health, renewed relationships, new marriages, a new child. I don't care what it is, there might be all kinds of things for which you are giving thanks, and you can see clearly that the Lord is good.

I don't care if you sit around the table today and you look around and you think about the past year and the only thing you can think of to give thanks for are the people you are sitting there with and by the end of the day you're not so sure you should have done that. I don't care if that's your experience today. You have this reality. The Lord is good and his love endures. That's a reason to shout for joy in our soul, to shout for joy in our daily lives, to shout for joy in what we do throughout every aspect of our life because the Lord is good and this touches us. The Lord is good and this changes us. The Lord's goodness endures forever.

His goodness that endures forever, as hopefully we've seen today in worship, is that he forgives your sin. It is he that took away everything that separated you from God. When you were born into this world, you were not born sheep of his pasture. You were not born his people, the sheep of his pasture as this Psalm says. You were born separated from God. You were born sinful. I don't care how cute or cuddly babies are and how nice baby powder smells, they are not right with God because they and every person is born sinful. That separates us from God. God is holy and he demands that we be holy. We just can't do it. We are born sinful. *“Surely I am a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”* ([Psalm 51:5](#).)

You say “Hey, that isn't fair.” Check what you ask for. You don't need a fair God. You need the God who is faithful in love, because here is how unfair God is. He says the wages of sin is death ([Romans 6:23](#)), but we who are sinners do not endure that eternal death. We don't have to because he sent Jesus to live perfectly in our place and to die in our place. He loved us with that depth of love that he left heaven itself and came for us simply to make us his people and the sheep of his pasture. Then what Christ did for the world God made ours personally, each one of us, when he gave us the gift of faith that Jesus is our Savior. That's the love of God that endures forever because all the

other blessings in our life will come and they'll go. Throughout life blessings come and go. As they come, thank God for them. Enjoy them and make use of them. But know that many of them are just temporary.

The greatest that remains forever of faith, hope and love is love. ([1 Corinthians 13:13](#).) Isn't that what the New Testament says? God's love is what has taken away our sins. God's love is what opened heaven for us. God's love is what will take us to an eternity that far outweighs any blessings that we have in the here and now. So this is the reality that you and I live in.

We live in this reality that we have a God that loves us no matter what our outward circumstances are. It doesn't matter if we feel loved or not. He loves us. That is our reality. The Psalmist is trying to remind us always, in good times and in bad, to know that the Lord is God. He made us and we are his people. That's our reality as Christians. What an incredible statement that is. If that doesn't thrill you, if that doesn't send a shiver up your spine and say, "Wow! What an awesome God I have!" Then I feel for you. Because when you stop and contemplate what sinners we are and you see the goodness of God in taking away our sins, then it doesn't surprise us that God helps us and gives us the material things we need. Then it won't surprise us when difficulty comes because he's told us it will come. But he tells us then "Hang onto my goodness. Hang onto it. Put it on like a life jacket. Live in it every day of your life because it will keep you afloat through the difficult times." The Lord is good, his love endures forever. That's our reality.

When you and I live in that reality, then it's not just coming into this house to praise him, but then it is also when we go out and we live for him. We worship him in every area of our life, not just in church stuff. Then we want to be the best parent we can be to worship God, who is good and his love endures forever. We want to be the best child we can be to our parents because God is good and his love endures forever. We want to be the best student, the best worker, the best employee that we can be because it's a way we say thank you to God, who has changed our reality from separated from him to connected to him. It changes us. What a blessing that is.

So know that the Lord is good and his love endures forever. Then live in that love. Amen.