

SERMON FOR JUNE 14, 2020

TEXT: PSALM 100

THEME: SING TO THE LORD!

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness!

Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise!

Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

In the name of Jesus!

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed how we worship. During the time of our closure, many of us turned to online worship. It filled a void but still could not replicate the real joy of worshipping together as God's people. Just as the coronavirus has changed our world, so too there is another malady that is unseen. If you have been going to our YouTube channel or Facebook page for devotional material, you have heard me refer to this other malady, actually we can call it a spiritual pandemic that affects our society. It has been called the NoonDay Demon.

The NoonDay Demon gets its name from a group of Christians called the desert fathers. These fathers were actually desert monks who sought to separate themselves from society in order to live for Jesus. In their solitary

lives, they experienced temptation from the devil and his demonic band. It was as a result of the experiences of fighting temptation that came from what is now known as “The Seven Deadly Sins.” One sin that particularly plagued them was the sin of sloth, or what was then known as Acedia. Acedia was called the NoonDay Demon.

This Noon Day Demon usually attacked at high noon, when the sun was at its highest overhead. Then, in the middle of the day when the monk was busy, the sun would distract him, looking at it and feeling as if time stood still, then he would become indifferent, lackadaisical, and just would not care about God or anything else. And that is why it was called the NoonDay Demon, for this demon would attack the monk out of nowhere, making him feel as if he just didn’t care anymore. It is a dangerous attitude where you don’t give a rip about anything, including not caring about God or your relationship with Him.

It has been said that this noonday demon is the demon and the chief sin of our culture. Acedia tempts and plagues all of us. There is a spirit of Acedia that fills the world, a spirit of people not caring anymore, about life, about God, about themselves, and about those around them. Acedia strikes when we hear the news of death and despair and we become hardened to its effects on us and on others.

You can notice Acedia taking hold in your life when, having a lot of time on your hands, you grow bored and indifferent to life. You grow indifferent to God, to the Church, to His Word, to prayer, you find your life boring, and you want change, because you find yourself doing the same old thing by repetition day after day.

Soon your soul becomes dry, your spirit lifeless, you feel as if your spirit is parched, dry like a desert. You go from one thing to the next, trying to find enjoyment and pleasure, but you can't because Acedia has taken hold.

Acedia can affect anyone at any time. But there is an antidote for Acedia, and the Psalmist gives us the remedy in Psalm 100. The answer is singing praise to the Lord. All of creation is to praise the Lord by singing and by serving Him. For it is in the Lord that we live, move, and have our being.

Now the Psalmist says: "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord, he is God!" We are to come to an understanding that the Lord God, Yahweh as He reveals His name to be in the Old Testament, is the one true God. Many today believe that human life is an accident. We evolved as creatures from a lower life form. We live by our own ability, our own power,

our own intellect. We are masters of our lives and in control of our own destiny.

The Psalmist though tells us something quite different. The Lord God is the One who made heaven and earth. Just as Moses wrote in the Book of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Yahweh, the Lord God, made us. We are the handiwork of His almighty hands. We live and move and have our being as a result of the power and work of God alone.

God reveals Himself to be all powerful. We can look at all of creation and see the power of God. The Psalmist writes in Psalm 8: "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. (Yet) When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?" Yes, God is all powerful, but how do we know what God's disposition is towards us? Will He use His might to condemn and damn us? Or does He love us? Does He know our name, who we are, does He even care for us.

The Psalmist answers these questions by telling us that we praise God for we are the sheep of His pasture. God, in love, sent His only Son into the world not to condemn the world but to save the world through Him. Jesus is

your Good Shepherd, He gave His life for the sheep. Christ has purchased and won you, buying you back from the clutches of sin, Satan, and death, not with money, but with His holy precious blood and innocent suffering and death all so that you might be His own and live under Him in His kingdom, serving Him in all righteousness, innocence and blessedness. Yes, Jesus has purchased you with the price of His blood shed on the cross. He knows who you are. He has the hairs of your head numbered. He has called you by name in the waters of your Baptism. You belong to Him.

His promise is that He will always take care of you. Just as a shepherd takes care of his sheep, Jesus will take care of you, He will work all things out to your good and His glory. Nothing will ever separate you from His love. God, then, is worthy and deserving of our praise. We sing praises to Him in worship, we praise Him as we seek to live our lives to His glory and in accordance with His will. We praise God for He is faithful. His steadfast love lasts forever. “For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.”

Just as each of us needs air to breathe and food to eat, our praising of God is similar. The more you praise Him, the more you get strength from God. Praise is the greatest gift we can give to our Lord, praising Him with song, but

also with our entire being, and as we do so, we learn to love the Lord all the more and He then blesses again with His love. Praising God is the greatest gift we can give God. So sing a new song to the Lord, with your lips as well as your life, for the love of the Lord lasts forever.

Amen