

Day 1

Josie Self

Read

Psalm 100:2

Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

Think

Sing to the Lord a new song. Make a joyful noise. Shout for joy in the Lord. Many of these declarations come from the Psalms, but they are scattered throughout the entire Bible. What does it mean to sing Him a new song? What is a joyful noise before the Lord? What does this mean if you're not a musician or someone who enjoys singing?

Luckily for us, our worship and songs are not limited to our musical expression, although that form of worship is beautiful. We have the opportunity to worship the Lord in the way we work, the way we serve our families, and the way we engage with those in our communities. Our worship is our way of life. It is daily laying down ourselves and saying yes to chasing after the presence of God. Our worshipping with gladness has less to do with singing a happy song and more to do with the joyful posture of our hearts as we fulfill Jesus' commandment to love God and love others.

Our joyful songs are completely unique to each of us. They are songs of gratitude as we remember the Lord's faithfulness. They are songs of joy as we celebrate the ways He is moving in the lives of our loved ones. The important thing about songs is that they require our participation. We *offer* joyful songs to the Lord which means that we must actually sing them. We do this by sharing of His goodness with others, by telling of His salvation day after day, and giving thanks to Him who is worthy in every season.

Reflect

What is the joyful song you need to sing today? What is a unique way that you can worship the Lord with gladness?

Pray

God, I come before you with a joyful and thankful heart. I long for my words, thoughts, and actions to glorify you and bring you honor and praise. I ask that you show me opportunities to worship you through service, through telling others about your goodness, and giving thanks to you no matter the season. I want my life to be an instrument of worship to you. I love you, Lord. Amen.

Day 2

Matthew Perkins

Read

Matthew 6:31-34

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Think

It is so easy to get caught up in life and our daily challenges that we often look past some of the most basic things that God is trying to teach us. In these verses, Jesus calls out those who wonder about earthly things such as what we eat and what we drink and goes on to describe these as what the "pagans run after." If you stopped reading here, this verse would only be half as powerful as Jesus goes on to say that these are things that our heavenly father already knows that we need. It is so easy to go through every day in life, especially in a season like the one we are currently in, with anxiety, wonder and questioning of the future. These verses are such a good reminder of the things we do not have to worry about and rather can give these burdens to the Lord. These verses go on, as Jesus makes a bold statement, saying how when we seek the kingdom first then all of these things will be given to us as well. He isn't meaning that we will just be given an easy life, but rather the benefits and joy of living a life in and for Christ. Finally, the end of these verses always strikes me. We don't have to worry because we gain nothing from worrying. We are blessed enough that we have a God who wants to take this worry and anxiety away from us and put on him. In living a life seeking the kingdom first, we will experience a life of less anxiety and of less worry. He doesn't promise that it will be easy, but he does promise that it will be worth it.

Reflect

What parts of my life are bringing me the most anxiety and worry? Once I have identified these areas, what can I do to bring change to them? Am I letting God work in these areas in my life? And if not, how can I begin to let God play a role in those areas of my life as well? Do I find myself seeking other worldly things before seeking the kingdom of God? What do I find myself seeking before I seek God? How can I change my intentions to seek God first?

Pray

Jesus, thank you for bearing my worry, anxieties and sin on the cross so that I no longer have to do so. Please give me a spirit of love and strength rather than one of fear. Please help turn my focus and attention on you first, above all other things. Thank you for your goodness. Amen.

Day 3

Dan Self

Read

Romans 15:20

“It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation.”

Think

It’s often easy to forget, when reading the New Testament, that Paul was *not* working alone, but his ministry of spreading the good news about Christ was done in conjunction with many others. Paul’s conviction, here, is not that *his* letters become the most important or *his* teaching become the most valuable, but that the Gospel is preached on a basis of context and relationship. For Paul to barge into a foreign nation that already has pastors at work spreading the Good News would be to undo a lot of the relational work that has already been done. Part of the beauty of the church is that there is no “perfect way” to preach the Gospel, but the Gospel is applicable and relevant for every person in every culture.

Reflect

When Paul says he doesn’t want to build on someone else’s foundation, imagine yourself as someone who is building a foundation right now. With your friends. With your family. With your teams. You are uniquely positioned in the same culture and context as those people, and you are building a foundation of the Gospel in those people’s lives. Your relationship with someone else is a far better building block than a convincing speaker or an eloquent writer. How can you use your relational capital to continue to lay a Gospel foundation in someone’s life this week?

Pray

God, in your grace and your holiness you have not only saved me *from* a life apart from you but you have saved me *to* a life filled with the purpose of spreading your Gospel. Open my eyes to the unique ways you have equipped me, and to the unique place you have placed me in this season.

Day 4

Eleanor Vice

Read

Psalm 119:116

“Sustain me according to your promise, and I will live; do not let my hopes be dashed.”

Think

This verse exhibits lament and wisdom. The psalmist embeds these notions to highlight his sure confidence that God answers prayers and sustains His people when facing opposition. As the psalmist in verse 119 continues to cry out in lament, he reveals the burden he is facing from his enemies. In essence, these are God’s enemies too.

While biblical foresight discloses that the unfaithful wander from God’s word, the faithful on the other hand, take refuge in the word that God proclaims. In spite of whatever adversity we as a community may be experiencing right now, live comfortably on the word of God's promise and let hope triumphant over the fear of the unknown.

Reflect

In the midst of this discussion, the psalmist asserts a vivid appeal to faith. As troubles arise in your life, do you cry out to God seeking help? Do you recall a time where you needed to reassure yourself on the promises God makes? How has his promises changed your perception on the battles we endure? While we may encounter situations that have us ponder on God’s intentions, trust that God never breaks his promises.

Prayer

God, I come to you. Help us live according to your word and fathom the promises who have in store for each and every one of us. Open our hearts to you and allow hope to persevere in times of chaos. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 5

Josie Self

Read

Hebrews 6:11-12

“Our great desire is that you will keep on loving others as long as life lasts, in order to make certain that what you hope for will come true. Then you will not become spiritually dull and indifferent. Instead you will follow the example of those who are going to inherit God’s promises because of their faith and endurance.”

Think

One of the greatest challenges of seasons like quarantine is to not let our faith grow dull. How do we keep a vibrant life with Jesus and keep from growing dull and indifferent when every day feels the same and we don’t get to do a lot of things that we used to enjoy? Scripture tells us that the key is to keep loving others with faithful endurance. This means to continue looking for ways to love our families even when we’re over it, to love those people that are hard to love with faithfulness, and for those of us who are leaders, to keep discipling those in our circles with perseverance. We build up our faith by loving others and this is how we inherit the promises of God: a rich, full, and satisfying life in Him!

Reflect

Do you feel like your faith has grown dull in this season? What factors do you think have contributed to that? Jesus wants you to have a vibrant life with Him! The Christian life was never meant to be dull and boring, but instead exciting and full of awe and wonder at who He is. How can you share in the love and joy of Jesus by loving someone in your life today? Who needs your encouragement, service, or kindness today? Let’s love our people well!

Pray

God I confess that I have, at times, let my faith grow dull. I have not always put you first or loved others in my life the way that you call me to. I desire to have a rich and vibrant relationship with you and I want to experience the fullness of life that you have to offer. I ask that you would give me opportunities to love people with faithfulness and endurance this week. Open my eyes to the needs of the people around me and help me to love and serve them with my whole heart. Thank you for paying the ultimate price and for loving me unconditionally. Now I want to join you in loving others the way you have shown me. Amen.