PSALM 95: “OH COME, LET US WORSHIP”

We’ll be looking this morning at Psalm 95, continuing our theme of worship. Last week in Psalm 84 we focused on our own hearts being ready to worship God. Our worship should be a heartfelt response to God because of our love for Him. Worship should not be done merely out of a sense of duty. Today, again, we’ll talk about worship, but this time we’re going to look at it from God’s perspective – what He desires from those of us who come before His presence to worship Him. When Psalm 95 was compiled, the writer was unknown. However Hebrews 4:7-8 quotes from Psalm 95 and attributes it to David. So, if you believe as I do that all scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit, then we can say with a great deal of certainty that Psalm 95 is a psalm of David even though it doesn’t say so in the title.

Why is it that we come every week (or most every week) here to FBC Rockwall to worship God? Last week I used the marriage analogy and made the point that even though coming to worship corporately is expected of us as believers (the Bible says so), what primarily motivates us to come here and worship should be our love for the Lord. My observation is that far too often we tend to view things from our own perspective (how I feel, what’s in it for me, how does this apply to me) and we forget that there is a much more significant heavenly perspective. And so it is with the whole concept of worship. From God’s perspective why is it that He wants us to worship Him? The answer is simple yet profound --- Because He alone is worthy! Second Samuel 7:22 “How great you are, Sovereign Lord! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears.” First Chronicles 29:11: “Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.” Ephesians 3:20-21: “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” Revelation 5:13: “Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!’”

He is worthy of our worship. He alone – Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Trinity, three in one. It is all about God! And it is our joy and honor to praise and worship Him.

So with last week’s lesson in mind, our love for Him, our desire to please Him for who He is and what He’s done; and with this idea that He alone is worthy of our worship – with that background, let’s look at our passage in Psalm 95:

READ Psalm 95:1

Here is our call to come and worship God. God desires joyful hearts. We sing, some of us sing well, others, like me, not so much but we make a joyful noise to God. He doesn’t focus on how well we sing but rather what is in our hearts. He is described here as the “rock of our salvation.” He, by His grace, and thru my faith, saved my soul! That is foremost in the psalmist mind as he comes to worship God. So we come to worship God with joy and singing. But that’s not all…

READ Psalm 95:2

When we come to worship God we come with a deep sense of gratitude. Just look at all He has done for us! Yes, He saved our souls and that would be enough, but then on top of that He showers us with grace like rain. Blessings all around, none of which we deserve. All I am and all that I have I owe to Him! When we worship God, He knows us intimately. He knows what’s in our minds and hearts as we sing our songs to Him. What pleases God is that we have joyful and thankful hearts, even if our singing isn’t all that good. Our worship is sincere. We mean what we sing. There is no pretense, just an honest and joyful expression of our love for Him and our sincere gratitude. Jesus Himself said that “true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him.” (John 4:23)

READ Psalm 95:3

Simply put, there is no one like our God. He is a great God. He is the sovereign Ruler of the universe. He is above all. And the psalmist, David, reminds us that He is the Creator of all things…

READ Psalm 95:4-5

From the deepest deep, from the bottom of the Mariana Trench more than 36,000 feet deep…

To the highest height, to the peak of Mount Everest, 29,090 feet high. God formed it all with His mighty hands. He made all the seas and oceans and the dry land.

Yes, we can view God from our own personal perspective, for what He has done in our lives. And that’s important. But let us never forget who God is, the Creator of the world, all powerful, all knowing, all present, eternal, sovereign, GOD! And He is worthy of our worship and praise!

READ Psalm 95:6

And, oh, by the way, Not only did God create the earth but He made you and me too! This verse is a transition of sorts. The psalmist in the first 5 verses of Psalm 95 has an upward perspective, exalting God. This is an important aspect of our worship, to praise and exalt God. But as we begin to see how great and awesome God is, we’re reminded of our own humble estate. He’s the Creator. We’re the created. We were made in HIS image. And knowing this should cause us to humble ourselves before God – “Let us worship and bow down…let us kneel before the Lord.” We humbly submit ourselves to Him and then we boldly bring our petitions to Him. And we do this thru prayer.

READ Psalm 95:7

Verse 7 speaks of the relationship that we have with God. And like Psalm 23 David here uses the analogy of the shepherd and the sheep. V 7 ends in the middle of a sentence. We’ll continue the thought in v 8 in just a minute, but a point needs to be made here. “Today, if you hear His voice…” The question is not “Is God speaking?” For clearly He is. The question is, sheep, “Are you listening?” Do you hear Him?” Now how does God speak to us? In an audible voice from heaven? He could, He has before. In visions and dreams? He could, He has before. Normally God speaks to us thru His word, thru His messengers (preachers and teachers) and thru the Holy Spirit. So worship involves not only singing and prayer, but listening to, hearing His word. In our modern worship services that comes thru the preaching and teaching of God’s word.

In all my years of going to church and to various worship assemblies, revivals I have never once heard the preacher or teacher stand up in front of the group and say, “You all can go home now. Come back next time because today God has nothing to say to us.” Never. The fact is that no matter how good or how boring or how human the messenger is, God has a word for us. And even though they may not preach or teach all that well, God has something He wants His people to hear.

When God speaks to us His message thru His messenger, thru His word, thru the Holy Spirit, we have two options: (1) Yes, I agree with You, I will submit to You and do what You are saying; or (2) No, I won’t do it. That doesn’t apply to me, it’s irrelevant… that’s exactly what happens in v 8

READ Psalm 95:8-9

The psalmist warns about hardening our hearts, about ignoring God’s message. He uses a real example from Exodus 17. Exodus 17 follows Exodus 14 (parting of the Red Sea) and Exodus 16 (manna and quail). READ Exodus 17:1-7. Application – don’t come to God with bad attitudes, complaining and murmuring and questioning the goodness of God.

No wonder Jesus rebuked His own disciple, “Oh ye of little faith, why did you doubt?” (Matt 14:31). Don’t be like them. Live your life with expectant faith in God who loves you and cares for you. It isn’t that the concerns of the people – hunger, fear, thirsty, etc – were not legitimate concerns, but it was their attitude toward God that was the problem. The psalmist here speaks the words of God directly – “they had seen My work.” They should have had faith, believed I would provide, because they had seen Me come thru for them many times before. And this made God sick.

READ Psalm 95:10

Negativity and lack of faith in God, failure to trust and rely on Him was a problem with that generation. And for 40 years, until they all died out God put up with their rotten attitude toward Him. No, he didn’t strike them all dead. He kept providing for them day after day, manna, water, quail, what they needed to survive. He was faithful despite their complaining. But God says, “I loathed that generation,” a people who had gone astray in their hearts, they failed to trust Me, they did not have the right hearts, filled with joy and thanksgiving and hope for the future.

The whole idea here is that we can learn from their mistakes. We should not be like that. You know, there were consequences for their bad attitude toward God…

READ Psalm 95:11

We know what happened. Except for the two faithful ones, Joshua and Caleb, nobody from that generation (20 years of age and up) got to experience living in the land of promise. What God intended them to have, they forfeited. As I was preparing this lesson I was reminded of that song, “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.” There is a line in the first verse which says, “O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!” Unfortunately there are times, if we are not careful, when we could become just like the people of Israel or Jesus’ disciples. And the result is that we may miss out on some of the blessings that God intended for us to have.

No, we won’t lose our salvation. Praise the Lord, that is secure! But we could lose the joy of our salvation. We could rob ourselves of the peace that passes all understanding. When we get our eyes off of Jesus and look around at the prevailing negative circumstances in our life, we could become like Peter out there on the Sea of Galilee and begin to sink.

Tiny our dog in the morning when I go into her area in the utility room will roll over on her back – submitting to my authority over her. She fully expects I will do all this stuff for her and for the moment she humbly submits to me and says by her actions, “I will do whatever you say to do.” And that’s how we are with God. But then later in the day when we put her outside because it’s a nice day and she needs to be out and not cooped up in the house all day she stands outside the patio door and for hours will bark letting us know that she is not happy with the circumstance we have placed her in. She has no regard or thought as to why we did it. She just doesn’t like it. And she lets us know that she is not happy.

Close with some practical application. Prepare your heart for worship. Leave your negative thoughts, critical spirit in the parking lot. Come to God with the right attitude for worship – “I want to hear from You. I want to tell you what is heaviest on my heart. I want to praise You for Your goodness to me, for saving me, etc. I want to meet with You today.” As you sing the words to the hymns and choruses think about what you are saying. Make those words of praise personal. Participate in worship, don’t just be a spectator at an event. Be a worshipper. He is worthy of our worship.

We are going to close our time out this morning singing one of my favorite hymns. I love the words to this song, especially the 3rd verse. “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing.” Sing this to the Lord. Worship him in spirit and in truth. Exalt the Savior, trust Him, humble yourself, be honest with God.