

The Heart of a Worshiper

Lesson 1: A Call to Worship

We commonly think about “worship” taking place at church, in a corporate setting. But, as was stated earlier, we want to examine worship in the context of everyday life. The concept of a “worshiper” in this context looks at the attitudes and responses to situations we encounter on an everyday basis. While we will explore this in detail in the lesson entitled Results of Worship (*part 2*), in this lesson we want to respond to the sample scriptures provided in terms of our individual lives outside of the hour or so we spend at Mass.

Old Testament Calls to Worship

Psalm 95:1-2 — Come, let us **sing joyfully** to the LORD; cry out to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with a song of praise, joyfully sing out our psalms.

Psalm 100:1-2, 4 — **Shout joyfully** to the LORD, all you lands; serve the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful song... Enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise. **Give thanks to him**, bless his name...

1. While you may not be able to “sing” as Psalm 95 commands, everyone can “shout” as it says in Ps. 100. How do these two scriptures apply to you? How would you interpret their application?

Psalm 34:1-3 — I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. My soul will boast in the Lord; let the humble [also rendered as poor or afflicted] hear and rejoice. Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together.

2. What does it mean to “...extol the Lord at all times?”

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This passage calls a person to a life characterized by:

- constant praise
- humble joy
- communal encouragement

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Living Out Psalm 34:1 calls for a commitment to “extol (or bless) the Lord at all times” and that “his praise will always be on my lips”:

- **Praise in all Circumstances:** This means praising God not only when things are good, but also during trials, stress, or sadness, (I Thessalonians 5:16-17 says to: Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing). **It's a choice to acknowledge God's sovereignty regardless of your feelings or situation.**

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- **Mindfulness and Gratitude:** Make it a habit to pause and thank God for small, everyday blessings, like a good meal, safe travel, or a kind word. **This turns mundane moments into acts of worship.** Charles Spurgeon, in the late 1860s, wrote a commentary on Psalms entitled The Treasury of David. With regards to this passage, he wrote: **“He who praises God for mercies shall never want a mercy for which to praise.”**

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- **Rethinking My First Response:** Another translation of the last part of verse 1 states that: “...his praise shall continually be in my mouth.” This reminds us to strive to make **praise and blessing** our first verbal response to people and situations, rather than complaint or worry (Matt. 12:34 — ...out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, NRSV. And the NIV puts it this way...the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.)

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Living out Psalm 34:2 — **Humble Joy**

One version translates verse 2 as: “My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad.”

So, this Humble Joy is made up of two parts:

1. Boasting in God alone
2. Encouraging the humble

Boasting in God alone: means recognizing that any strength, success, or goodness I possess comes from God. My “boast” or pride is not in my own abilities, but in God’s grace; an understanding of which leads to humility. (see Eph 1:3-14)

Encouraging the humble: When you share your faith and testimony, the goal is not self-promotion but to give others, particularly those who are struggling or "humble, or poor, or afflicted" **a reason to be glad** and trust in God too.

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- I Peter 3:15 says, ...you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.
- One translation puts it this way: “be ready always to give, to anyone who asks, a reason for the hope that lies within you.”

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Living out Psalm 34:3 — **Communal Exaltation**

The call to “**Glorify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!**” emphasizes the shared nature of faith...we worship together. By that I mean we actively participate in our faith community's gatherings (like Mass, or other gatherings) to lift up God's name alongside others. But too often we passively “just show up.” Notice I said, “we actively participate.” This active participation means we:

- Invite and Encourage
- Build Others Up

Living out Psalm 34:3 — **Communal Exaltation**

This active participation means we:

- **Invite and Encourage:** We become an invitation to others to see and join in our worship. This is done through both your enthusiastic praise and your loving, consistent behavior.
- **Build Others Up:** Intentionally speak words that elevate (glorify, magnify) God in conversation, rather than focusing on gossip or negativity.

Psalm 96:1-2 — Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day."

- Continuous Gratitude
- Worship as a Lifestyle
- Private and Public Praise
- Sharing Your Story
- In Every Setting
- Consistency

In essence, living out Ps. 96 means making the praise of God and the sharing of His salvation an instinctive, daily outpouring from a thankful heart.

Psalm 29:2 — Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.

- Recognition of God’s Perfect Character
- The Posture of the Worshipper
- A “Holy Attire” (in Hebrew, *hadratqodesh* can also be translated as holy attire or holy array)
- Aesthetic Reflection of God
- Response to Divine Majesty

Isaiah 55:1 — Consider the phrases “buy and eat” and “without money and without price.”

- “Buy and Eat” represents acquiring and taking in something vital for life and well-being.
 - Acquiring: this is an invitation to take possession of spiritual sustenance like salvation, wisdom, understanding, righteousness, etc.
 - Eating symbolizes internalizing these gifts — making them part of one’s inner life and soul, which leads to spiritual satisfaction and renewal.

Isaiah 55:1 — Consider the phrases “buy and eat” and “without money and without price.”

- “Without Money and Without Price” represents acquiring and taking in something vital for life and well-being.
 - Grace and Mercy: the gifts are not earned, but offered freely out of God’s grace and mercy
 - Universal Access: the spiritual sustenance is accessible to **the poor, the thirsty, and the disenfranchised** — those who *recognize* their need but have no means to meet it.