

Celebrating God's Goodness — Spencer Campus Birthday Party

Psalm 100

KURT

When was the last time you had a party? When was the last time you invited friends to your house to serve hot wings and super nachos because you had something to celebrate? Maybe the only time you celebrate is when you are forced to celebrate because of holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas.

If we are honest, most of us don't like to take time to celebrate.

Stopping to have a party in our fast-paced world feels like we are doing something wrong. It feels like we are resting when we should be working.

When open our Bibles, we find something very different. Did you know God commands us to stop, look back on what he has done and celebrate his goodness?

JORDAN

In fact, God wants his people to celebrate so much that in the Old Testament he set aside several days and weeks each year to celebrate. These days and weeks were set apart to remember and celebrate what God had done for his people. Listen to how much time God set aside for his people to celebrate:

First, there was the Sabbath. Every Saturday, the people were to take a break from their work and remember God and his creation. It's a good thing to take a break and celebrate.

At the beginning of every month, the people of Israel were supposed to celebrate. Just like the Sabbath, they were to rest and celebrate.

Every year in the spring, the people of Israel celebrated the Passover. This weeklong celebration remembered the great salvation God gave his people when he delivered them from Egypt.

A few weeks later was the Feast of Weeks. At the beginning of the wheat harvest, the people were called to pause and celebrate God's faithfulness in providing their bread.

Fast forward to the fall, and there was another time of remembrance: The Feast of Trumpets. This feast was a special time of rest and preparation for the Day of Atonement.

A few days after the Feast of Trumpets came the Day of Atonement. This day was set aside for the redemption of the people of Israel and the forgiveness of sins.

A few weeks after that was the Feast of Booths. This was the party of parties. It was a weeklong celebration of God's provision for them in the desert. Everyone in Israel would camp out the whole week and celebrate. It was like RAGBRAI without the drunkenness and bike riding.

As you can see, God wanted his people to look back on his goodness, remember it and celebrate. He created them to experience joy, and one of the ways to express that joy was to, well, express it. To enjoy food. To pause and thank God for what he had done.

Now here's the kicker. Many of us probably wouldn't be comfortable in the Old Testament. If we are honest, we are too busy to stop and celebrate. We are too serious to have a good time, enjoy a time of rest and rejoicing. If we're honest, we would think of ourselves as too holy to have a good time.

But there lies the problem. Holiness and feasting are not opposites. Holiness and celebration are not enemies. They are joined together in the Old Testament, and it is our hope to do the same thing here at CrossWinds too!

KURT

Psalms 100 talks about God's people celebrating God's goodness. Let me read it to you.

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. Psalm 100:1-5 (ESV)

This Psalm answers two questions about celebrating. Why should we celebrate? How should we celebrate?

JORDAN

Why does Psalm 100 tell us to celebrate?

First, it tells us to celebrate because of our identity. In other words, we should celebrate because of our new identity through Jesus. This is what the Psalmist mentioned in verse 3:

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. (Psalms 100:3 ESV)

At CrossWinds, we celebrate our new identities in Jesus. Do you remember what we learned in the book of Ephesians? God calls us holy (v. 1); blessed (v. 3); chosen (v. 4); loved (v. 4); predestined (v. 5); sons & daughters (v. 5); redeemed (v. 7); forgiven (v. 7); lavished with grace (v. 8); united with Christ (v. 10); inheritors (v. 11); sealed with the Spirit (v. 13); given the Spirit of wisdom & revelation (v. 17); his glorious inheritance (v. 18). Wow! And that's just the first chapter!

We are adopted brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, the son of God. *We are described as the most blessed beings in the universe because of God's undeserved kindness to us through Jesus.* If God wanted to be kinder or more loving he could not be kinder or more loving than he already has been to us through Jesus Christ. Folks, remember what God has done for us. We can't be more blessed than being loved and forgiven by Jesus. That is why every weekend, church is to be a celebration service. The reason we celebrate is because of our new identities in Jesus.

KURT

Second, it tells us to celebrate because God is good.

In verse 5 it tells us we need to celebrate because God is good to us. Think back on your life. Hasn't God been good? God gives us health. We have food. We have family.

God has not only been good to us individually but he has been good to us as a church family. Think of God's goodness to us over the last few years. There was paying off a mortgage. There were the funds for a emergency roof and basement project. There was the transformation of the stage and video upgrades to the Spirit Lake campus. There was the technology for the Spencer campus. God brought us Pastor Jordan. Last year the Spencer campus birthed and grew to what we celebrate today. What really fires me up is seeing new people on both the Spencer and Spirit Lake campuses falling in love with Jesus and his church. Hasn't God been good? That is something we need to celebrate.

JORDAN

Third, it tells us to celebrate God's faithfulness.

In that very same verse, the psalmist gives us another reason to celebrate: His faithfulness to his people. Throughout the ages, God has been perfectly faithful to his people even when they stray, even when they wander, even when we are unfaithful to him. As we think back to the past year of ministry here in Spencer—and in the years leading up to our launch—I cannot help but celebrate the unwavering faithfulness of God to CrossWinds Church.

He has been faithful in providing us with the funds to launch the campus. He has been faithful in providing us with volunteers who work tirelessly nearly every Sunday. And there are even small ways that aren't so small: In a building without air conditioning, he blessed us with a mild summer to continue to worship and grow during the summer.

And he has been faithful in encouraging his people. When we are discouraged, focused on what is *not* done, he reminds us what he has done. In Matthew 16, Jesus promised he would build his church and the gates of Hades would not overcome it. And he has been faithful to that promise. God has been faithful. That is something we need to celebrate.

And this morning is a Sunday set aside to do just that.

You see, not only does the Psalmist tell us *why* we should celebrate, but he also tells us *how* to celebrate.

HOW DOES PSALM 100 TELL US TO CELEBRATE?

KURT

First, celebrate with our attitude.

Psalm 100:2 tells us to serve the Lord with gladness. The first thing we see about how we celebrate is our attitude. Today, there is not room for sadness. God tells us to be filled with gladness.

Each of us has challenges that can steal our joy. Today, push those aside. Remember what God has done. Remember what God has done in your life and in the lives of others in CrossWinds. I wish I could show you the marriages that are restored at CrossWinds on both campuses, the young couples that got a biblical start to their marriages on both campuses, the broken lives God healed, the people far from God that were brought near, the people who never opened their Bibles that are now hungry to read it on both campuses. People without community have found love and community in CrossWinds on both campuses.

When we think about all God has done, how can we not worship God with an attitude of gladness?

JORDAN

Second, celebrate with our words.

He also tells us to celebrate with our words. With everything that we speak — here at CrossWinds and every day of every week, celebrate who you are, God's goodness, and his faithfulness, with your words. Verse 4 says as much:

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!” (Psalms 100:4 ESV)

This morning, we are going to have the chance to do just that. In a few moments, we are going to have several people who have been heavily involved with the Spencer campus — both from the Spencer campus and the Spirit Lake campus — sharing about God at work at CrossWinds. When we hear these words, let's celebrate God's steadfast love for CrossWinds over the past year.

But let's not just stop there. After the service, we are going to gather together for a feast, not all that different than what they would do in the Old Testament. (Well, I suppose the food will be different, but the same idea will be behind it). We encourage you to sit with others and share with one another how God has been faithful to you over the past year. Celebrate with one another through your words.

KURT

Third, celebrate with singing.

Verse 2 also tells us to come into his presence with singing. Like you, when I am celebrating something, I am moved to the point of singing about it. I can still remember after the birth of my second son leaving the hospital with my stereo cranking and my subwoofer shaking the intersection as I sang “My God is an awesome God” by Rich Mullins at the top of my lungs. I just had to sing as my heart burst with joy. God had given me not just one son but two. In a similar way, we must sing because God has not just given us one campus but two. That is such a blessing. The appropriate way to celebrate is singing.

Conclusion

This morning we stop and look back on who we are because of Jesus, the good things God has done and his faithfulness through this entire process of going multi-campus. We celebrate God’s goodness with our attitudes, our words and our singing.

CrossWinds, it’s time to celebrate.



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