

- <sup>1</sup> **Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.**  
<sup>2</sup> **Worship the LORD with gladness;  
 come before him with joyful songs.**  
<sup>3</sup> **Know that the LORD is God.**  
**It is he who made us, and we are his;  
 we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.**  
<sup>4</sup> **Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
 and his courts with praise;  
 give thanks to him and praise his name.**  
<sup>5</sup> **For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
 his faithfulness continues through all generations.**  
 (NIV 84)

Theme: Enter God's House with Songs of Thanksgiving

1. For he has made us
2. For his love endures forever.

Why are you here tonight? What brings you here to worship on the day before Thanksgiving? I hope that you are here today to praise God. I hope that you entered God's house in order to join in songs of thanksgiving to your Savior. But perhaps you are here because your parents made you. Maybe it was only because choir is singing tonight. Or simply because it is expected of you.

At times we must admit that we have entered God's house begrudgingly. Perhaps we were angry at God for something, or upset at another member, or maybe the pastor said something that irritated you. It is true that we may have at times entered God's house reluctantly.

But today we enter God's house with Songs of Thanksgiving. For God has created us and his love endures forever.

In this short psalm of five verses there are five invitations to worship God. Many reasons are given why we are to worship him. But really, these reasons are just a drop in a bucket. We could go on for days as to why we should worship God and thank him. One of the reasons given here is that God has made us. He created us from the dust of the

earth. He also created the world. Land, animals, stars, planets, and plants—the whole world was made by God. He also made our friends and family. Everything we own comes from God. He created it and then gave it to us. And he made everything for us. The world was created to serve us as the crown of God's creation. He did this through his love.

This alone should be enough reason for us to enter God's house with songs of the thanksgiving. But that is something that we often fail to do. And you give excuses: God didn't give you as much this year. With this economy, you don't have as much to be thankful for. Sure, God created this world, but with natural disasters that kill thousands and cause billions of dollars of damage every year. You'd think he'd be able to better control his creation. Your family doesn't get along all that well. You have few friends. So what exactly do you have to be thankful for?

In verse two you are invited to **serve the Lord with gladness**. But how can you serve the Lord with gladness? We often don't want to serve the Lord. Instead of looking for ways to show our love for God by serving him, we think that God is here only to serve us. "Why joyfully volunteer at the church to serve the Lord? That is not necessary," we tell ourselves. We know and believe that God serves us. But we never serve him in return. We take, but often fail to thank and serve. And often when we do serve, it is not with gladness. It is because we were asked to do it, or made by our parents. Maybe it was so that we could look good in front of others. We often fail to serve the Lord out of love and thanks for our salvation.

But God creating the world isn't the only thing he made. He also made us into a new creation. At the beginning of the world God created Adam and Eve in his own image. They were holy and righteous, just like God. They knew his will. But then they rebelled against God's will. They sinned against him and fell from grace. No longer were they in God's image. From that time on, we were God's enemies. We constantly sin against him. And we were on our way to hell.

But then Christ made us alive again. He created a new heart within us. That is, he brought us to faith. For many of us, this happened through

the waters of baptism. At the font, God washed away our sins and welcomed us with open arms as his dear children. For others, it was through the Word that the Holy Spirit brought you to faith. He caused you to believe in something that is offensive to our reason. God did this for us even though we are nothing but horrible miserable sinners. He graciously brought his enemies to faith. He made us his sheep. And as our Shepherd, he leads us to living waters.

And this causes us to enter God's house with songs of thanksgiving. But as you know, there are many more reasons why we sing his praises. We also enter his house with songs of thanksgiving today because his love endures forever.

Even though Christ made us a new creation we are still sinners. We sin against him constantly. We always fail to live up to the perfection that he demands. Countless times every day, we fail to show love to God. Instead, we look first to our own wants and desires. We seek to please ourselves, then others, and then maybe God. And because of this we deserve nothing but his wrath and punishment. We deserve to be sentenced to hell. To suffer with the devil for eternity. Because of our sin, we are not able to stand before God. Ever since Adam and Eve lost God's image, we have not been able to look at God and live. He is so glorious and holy, and we are such miserable sinners that we cannot lay our eyes on him and live. When Moses wanted to see God's face, God said, 'No.' God let him see his back, But not his face, otherwise he would have died. Even the smallest amount of God's glory we are not able to look at. Moses coming down from Mount Sinai and the Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration are just two examples of the slightest amount of God's glory being too much for us sinful human beings. By nature we are sinful and God's enemies. We cannot enter into God's presence by nature.

But through Christ we can. He came down to this earth and lived a perfect life in our place. He was put to death on a cross. And on that cross he took all our sins upon himself. No longer are our sins counted against us. And on the cross he gave us his righteousness. His perfect life became ours. So now we are no longer sinners in God's sight. But we are pure and innocent just like Jesus.

As a result, we can now stand before God's presence. We don't have to be afraid of his wrath, because it has been appeased. Through the blood of Christ we have been washed clean. We can stand before God without fear. We will do this when we move on from this earth and on the last day. Then we will see God as he is—in his full glory. Through Christ we have regained the image of God. And so we enter his house today without fear or angst. We enter with songs of thanksgiving.

This is just one of the many things that makes the Lord good. We have many reasons to thank him. Another reason is that his love and kindness endures forever. It never ends or runs out. His love is infinite. He showed kindness to us in the past by creating us. And by creating the world for us. He showed love to us by bringing us to faith. He shows love to us now by preserving his creation. By daily forgiving our sins and keeping us in the one true faith. And he shows love to us by promising us the gift of eternal life in heaven. And there in heaven we will see God in his full glory. We will live in his presence—not afraid, but joyful. For we will be made holy, just like Christ. And just like Christ's love and kindness, our eternal life will last forever. Never we will leave his presence again.

Why are you here today? To praise and thank God for everything he has done for you. Today you entered God's house with songs of thanksgiving. But let's not make today an anomaly. Every time you enter his house do it with a song of praise on your lips. Sing songs of thanksgiving everyday. For everyday your sins are forgiven and you are reminded of the gift of eternal life. Amen.