

"Worthy of Worship"

Text: Psalm 100

Grace, mercy and peace be yours in the certain knowledge that the One True God is not only your Creator, he is also the God who loved you so much he sacrificed his own Son for you. Amen.

Dear Fellow Christians:

Have you ever broken the Seventh Commandment ("Thou shalt not steal")? All true Christians will, of course, dutifully answer in the affirmative – "Yes, I have broken the Seventh Commandment." But let me ask it another way: "Are you a thief?" Hold that thought for a minute. We'll come back to it.

Before we do, let's look at it from the other perspective. Has anyone ever stolen from you? If you've ever been robbed, you'll probably never forget it. The first time someone stole from me was almost 40 years ago, and I remember it like it was yesterday. It was partly my fault. I locked my car doors but left the passenger-side window rolled down. (Young people might have to ask your parents what "rolled down" means.) Locked doors tend to lose a good bit of their effectiveness under such conditions.

The point is that I will never forget that feeling – when you first realize that someone has violated your space and helped themselves to what is yours. If nothing else, the episode taught me an added dimension to the 7th Commandment. I never wanted to make someone else feel that way by taking what was rightfully theirs.

But we do, don't we? In many different ways we take what is not ours – heedless of the loss or pain that we cause. We've not only broken the Seventh Commandment, we are thieves. We rob our employers whenever we slack off on company time, or "borrow" company property beyond our authority to do so. A man robs his own wife whenever he takes what belongs to his wife alone and offers it to another woman – everything from simple attention and flirtation to marital intimacy. Women rob their husbands of the respect that God expects them to render, and when they fail to honor his headship. Children rob their parents of obedience, and they rob their entire family of the harmony that is destroyed by their disobedience. Parents rob their children of attention and godly leadership. All of us rob our neighbors every time we squander a God-given opportunity to **"give a reason for the hope that is in us."**

How silly to imagine that we are in any way innocent when it comes to God's "Thou shalt not steal." Yet of all the ways we violate that holy commandment, none compares to the manner in which we routinely rob our God. Our text for this morning (Psalm 100) explains how:

ESV(Psalm 100:1-5) Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! ² Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! 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. ⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! ⁵ For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

So far the very words of our God. Mindful that these words have a holy, perfect, divine origin, so we pray: **"Sanctify us by your truth, O Lord. Your word is truth."** Amen.

What is the theft that is indicated by our text? Compare what is here written with other sections of God's Word, such as 1 Chronicles 16:29-31: **Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him! Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; ³⁰ tremble before him, all the earth; yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. ³¹ Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!"**

Our God describes himself as **"a jealous God"** not because he is insecure or temperamental, but because he is absolutely just and holy. As a just and holy God he demands what is right; he therefore also demands what is rightfully his. Honor and glory, praise and thanksgiving certainly head any such list of what mortals owe to their Creator. Psalm 100 (our text) outlines not just what human beings ought to *consider* rendering to their God, it tells us what God *deserves* because it is rightfully his. The list includes things like **"joyful shouts... glad service...singing... thanksgiving... praise... blessings."** These are the sorts of things that ought to flow naturally and without interruption from all mankind. Withholding any or all represents a most shameful sort of robbery and is certainly therefore anything but pleasing to the God who created us.

And that is where it all begins, isn't it – with creation? That's undoubtedly why our text takes us right to the very beginning, to creation. When mankind first toyed with the notion that he, in effect,

created himself, he began to rob God in ways never before imagined. Satan was absolutely delighted at man's utter foolishness. Make no mistake; not even the evil angels (the demons) believe in evolution. Not one. To every single one of them the very notion of evolution is utter nonsense – stupidity of the lowest order, which is why they love the concept. They know full well just who created both them and us, but they are absolutely thrilled with Darwin's infamous fairy tale. Why? Because it serves as the getaway vehicle for the ongoing robbery of God himself. That is also why the godless rage against any and all who seek to counteract this folly with the truth of creation.

I shouldn't have been, but I was rather surprised to hear of the rage and the overt persecution experienced by those who designed and built the state-of-the-art Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky. In a free society, why should the supposedly tolerant Godless care what others do on their own property and with their own money? Why should it fill them with such a desperate rage? The source of that irrational hatred and animosity can only be the devil himself. The demonic forces that hold such influence in our society today fly into a violent panic at anything and everything that seeks to break their evolutionary stranglehold on souls throughout the world. Beings that absolutely and thoroughly hate God do not want God to receive *any* of the praise and honor that he deserves. Their job is made so much easier whenever God is robbed of his title as Creator. Such evil is hard for the children of God to comprehend, but we would do well to acknowledge and prepare for it.

In the most simple and beautiful language our text lays out the truth: ***"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."***

If for no other reason, our God is worthy of our praise, honor, and thanksgiving simply because he is our Creator. We owe our very existence to him alone. Had he not breathed the breath of life into every single one of us, we would have no life at all – no experiences of any kind, no joy, no awareness, no fulfillment, nothing. We simply would never have come into existence. You and I exist, here and now, because our God willed it. He formed us in our mothers' wombs and gave life to our spirits. It would therefore be pure robbery to withhold our honor and praise from the One who is responsible for our very existence.

Yet all of this would prove cold and rather unfulfilling if we could acknowledge God only as our Maker. Mythology is full of false gods who, though believed to be powerful beyond human comprehension, nonetheless are believed to spend their time in petty acts of vengeance

and mischief. An alarming number of human beings still view the One True God in that way. They see him as a fickle, vindictive entity that allows bridges to collapse under unsuspecting motorists; who allows sadistic thugs to fly planeloads of women and children into crowded buildings; who allows sickness and disease to snatch even the good and gentle in the very prime of their lives.

It would indeed be cold comfort for the Psalmist to call for praise and thanksgiving for such a god. Fortunately, he did not. An examination of our text demonstrates that he called for praise and thanksgiving for the one God that is, in all ways, *worthy* of our praise and thanksgiving. Certainly it is good and right to ***"make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!"*** How appropriate to ***"serve the LORD with gladness"*** and to ***"come into his presence with singing."*** Yet we do so not just because we ***"know that the LORD, he is God"*** and that ***"it is he who made us, and we are his."*** We do so also because we know the true character of our God; we know that ***"the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations."***

What exactly does that mean, that ***"the LORD is good"*** and that ***"his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations"***? It means, at its very core, Jesus Christ.

Our feeble, human minds have a difficult time grasping the nature and character of our God. We hear him referred to as *"one God in three Persons,"* but it is difficult in the extreme for us to grasp the nature of that union. In other words, it is unacceptable to consider God without Jesus Christ, who is himself true God. It is wrong to consider God the Father without the Holy Spirit, who not only willed our salvation to the point that he brought saving faith into our hearts, but who also continually intercedes for us ***"with groanings too deep for words."*** (Romans 8:26)

All of which means, for example, that God the Father didn't suddenly change his mind and decide to show mankind compassion by sending his Son to pay the penalty for our sins. The love and the compassion that we see in Jesus Christ was an inseparable part of our Creator God from all eternity. That means that God the Father loved you and me even before we were born. The same love that we see so clearly in Jesus Christ has also always been present in equal measure in God the Father. Before the world was ever created, God the Father determined to sacrifice his Son on our behalf. In fact all of history prior to the coming of Jesus is simply one big, complex preparation for that

central, pivotal, monumental event. So also Galatians 4:4-5 teaches us that ***"when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."***

This is the sort of God that we have, and that is why the Psalmist could shout his praise and thanksgiving during good times and bad, for always ***"the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations."*** The same Promise that we see fulfilled in the empty tomb is that which God the Father himself spoke already in the Garden of Eden after man brought sin into God's perfect creation. It is the same promise of love that was repeated even as the remnant was carried off into the Babylonian Captivity. Even when all things seemed dark and foreboding, still ***"the Lord was good, and his steadfast love endured."***

Now then what about you? Are your days now filled with tears? Still the Lord is good, and his mercy endures – also for you. Are you anxious, fearful, frustrated? Still the Lord is good, and his mercy endures. Or are your days now full of happiness and contentment, laughter and celebration? Know then too that the Lord is good, but that goodness does not consist simply in those things that can and will disappear. Fall for that lie and you will most certainly be disappointed.

The Lord God is worthy of our praise and thanksgiving because he is our Maker, and, more than that, he is worthy because he has forgiven you and me every single one of our sins, having decided from eternity to punish his own Son in our place. That is the simple decree that will endure forever, for no one and nothing can rob us of the salvation won for us by our Savior God. That sin payment is an accomplished, historic fact that can never be undone. That's also why Paul could write what he did in his Letter to the Romans: ***"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."*** (Romans 8:38-39) Nothing can rob us of God's love for us because the greatest demonstration of that love, Jesus Christ, is a gift that has already been given, and what he did can never be taken away. Your forgiveness has already been earned – including forgiveness for routinely robbing him of the praise and thanksgiving he deserves.

Be reminded then, now and always, that your God is, in every way, worthy, and resolve to struggle daily to give him the praise, honor, thanksgiving, and service to which he is most certainly entitled. Amen.

Scripture Readings

^{ESV}(**Colossians 3:1-11**) If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵ Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. ¹¹ Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

^{ESV}(**Luke 12:13-21**) Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." ¹⁴ But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?" ¹⁵ And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." ¹⁶ And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷ and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' ¹⁸ And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'" ²⁰ But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' ²¹ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

ST. PAUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost – August 4, 2019

The Opening Prayer by the Pastor

The Opening Hymn – 9 (Stanzas 1-3) (Red Hymnal)

"O Day of Rest and Gladness"

The Order of Service – Supplement page 12ff. (Brown Hymnal)

The Scripture Lessons: (Printed on the back page of this bulletin)

The First Lesson: (Colossians 3:1-11) Faith in Jesus Christ changes everything. Our view of the world, our desires, how we deal with our passions – everything is changed when we "put on the new man" and thereby walk in harmony with God's will. So Paul here holds out comfort to the Colossian Christians who once followed the passions of their sinful hearts, but who had recently come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. His encouragement (to us as to them) is to simply live our lives in harmony with who and what we now are – God's forgiven children.

The Psalm of the Day – Psalm 23 (Page 36)

The Second Lesson: (Luke 12:13-21) How mightily Jesus struggled to raise the people of his generation above the worldly, visible things of this world and to fix their attention and hearts on things eternal. So also today God grants us "wake-up calls" to teach us how truly meaningless are the cares and riches of this temporal world. Every human death reminds us that we can take nothing with us from this life.

The Confession of Faith -

The Apostolic Creed (Brown Hymnal page 15)

The Pre-Sermon Hymn – 30 (Stanzas 1-2, 5-6) (Red Hymnal)

"Oh that I Had a Thousand Voices"

The Sermon – Text: Psalm 100 (Printed on the back page of this bulletin)

"Worthy of Worship"

The Offertory – (Supplement page 16 insert)

The Post Sermon Hymn – 339 (Stanzas 1-2, 6-7) (Red Hymnal)

"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"

The Prayers

The Benediction

The Closing Hymn – 9 (Stanzas 4-5) (Red Hymnal)

"O Day of Rest and Gladness"

Silent Prayer

Welcome! - We warmly welcome any visitors who might be with us this morning and invite you to join us every Sunday at this time. St. Paul is a congregation in fellowship with the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) – a conservative Lutheran synod with churches and missions throughout the United States, as well as Canada, India, and Africa. We are glad you are here. Thank you for letting us share the Word of God with you. Please record your visit in our Guest Book, and come again!

Attendance – Sunday (38) Average (38)

This Week at St. Paul:

Today	-10:00 a.m.	– Worship Service
	-11:00 a.m.	– Fellowship and coffee hour
Monday	-10:00 a.m.	– Study Conference in Lemmon
Monday-Friday	-6:30-8:30 p.m.	-- Vacation Bible School
Next Sunday	-10:00 a.m.	– Worship Service w/Communion
	-11:30 a.m.	– Annual Church Picnic

CLC News – Prince of Peace of Loveland has called Pastor Theodore Barthels. Redeemer of Bowdle and Zion of Ipswich have called Pastor Richard Kanzenbach. Representatives of the CLC, together with Pastor Mark Bernthal of the CLC Board of Doctrine, are scheduled to meet with representatives of the WELS and ELS later this month.

Study Conference – Pastor Roehl is scheduled to attend a Study Conference in Lemmon tomorrow.

VBS – Our Summer Vacation Bible School is scheduled to begin on Monday. Sessions will run Monday-Friday, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. each day. Please consider inviting a friend, so that we can share the message of Christ crucified with as many young people in our community as possible.

Annual Church Picnic – Our Annual Church Picnic is scheduled for next Sunday, following the Sunday service. The site is Hillside Lion's Park, Shelter #1.

Contact Sheet – Please take a moment this morning to update your contact information on the sheet you will find on the mailbox table.

Church Maintenance Items – Please also consult the church project sign-up on the mailbox table and prayerfully consider if you might be able to help with any of the projects listed there.