

## You're Invited!

### Psalm 95 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. <sup>2</sup> Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. <sup>3</sup> For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. <sup>4</sup> In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. <sup>5</sup> The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. <sup>6</sup> Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; <sup>7</sup> for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if only you would hear his voice, <sup>8</sup> "Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness, <sup>9</sup> where your ancestors tested me; they tried me, though they had seen what I did. <sup>10</sup> For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, 'They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways.' <sup>11</sup> So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.' "

"You coming to church?" A week ago, that didn't seem that hard of a question to answer. After this past Thursday, though, it's something else.

On any given day, we know that we should invite people to church – whether it's our immediate family, our friends, our neighbors, our coworkers, anyone and everyone around us. But how do we present that invitation? Do we present it as this is something that you are supposed to do, like a chore, an obligation? "Hey, you're supposed to go to church. This is what good people do. Why are we still talking about this?" Do we invite people with the fury of damnation? "You better go to church today because if you don't, God will hate you and you will go to hell, you sinner." Do we put out the invitation to church with the same depth and enthusiasm as asking someone if they want to come grocery shopping with us? "Hey, I'm going to church. You want to come? No. Okay. See you later." Do we mumble the invitation like, "Hey, yeah, I was just wondering if you might sometime wanna maybe go to church with me? But, you know, you don't have to... I ... I was just wondering. Okay. Bye." We come off almost as if we are ashamed that we are inviting them to church. Do we never invite because you were taught that you don't talk religion and instead you let each person go their own way? How many times have we failed to invite people to worship with us?

It's something a little different, but have you ever sung to anyone an invitation to come to church? (Sing) "Oh, come, let us sing to the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving, let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise. For the Lord is a great God and a great king above all gods. The deep places of the earth are in his hand; the heights of the hills are also his. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hand formed the dry land. Oh, come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand." If anyone has ever sung this invitation, you might think they are a little off, just a little weird. But this was King David's invitation for people to come and worship the LORD with him. He was so moved, so excited to do so, he had to sing it! All of Psalm 95 is an invitation for people to worship the LORD, presenting reason after reason to come and shout for joy and bend your knee to God.

David starts with the most important reason to have someone come to worship with you. "Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation." (verse 1) The LORD is the Rock of our salvation. He is our Rock because he is firm, solid, and unchanging. He doesn't erode away; he is stable and sure. You can count on him to be who he is and do what he does every second of every day. In him, we have stability. When everything else in life crumbles, decays, and leaves us, the LORD will not. He promised to forgive us all our sins. He promised to deliver us from every evil. This he has done and is doing. Through the life and works of Jesus Christ, our sins have been paid for by his blood and his perfection is credited to us through faith in him. We are holy and right in God's sight, and no one can take that away from us because he is our impenetrable, unchangeable Rock of our salvation! Can we do any less than shout thanks and praise to him?

David continues: "For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods." (verse 3) The LORD is greater than anything and anyone else in this world because he saved us and he rules over everything. Just look at everything he made – from the deepest parts of the earth to the highest mountain peaks to the vastness of the seas and all the dry land we live on. When we look around us, around this part of God's earth, every land formation, every second of sunshine and blue sky, every star in the sky, every snow-capped mountain peak – these are all the more reasons to sing praises to God, to worship him as the Maker of heaven and earth!

But it's not just the nature around us that God made. David continued his invitation: "Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker." (verse 6) The LORD made us! All life, our life, comes from God. When you opened your eyes this morning, you were able to do so because God made those eyes and he gave you the gift of sight. When you took another breath, that was God who made your lungs that work without you really even thinking about it. When your foot stepped on the floor and

you got out of bed, that was because God gave you the strength and muscles and the coordination to do so. He has given you every aspect of your life. And more than that, he gave you eternal life in heaven through the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. How can we do any less than marvel at these aspects of our own lives that God has given us and give the LORD thanks for it?

“For he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.” (verse 7) The LORD is not some impersonal being who keeps his distance from us. No, we belong to him; he made us. We belong to him; he saved us. And he does even more by personally being with us every single day. He doesn’t hand off our care to others as if he is too busy or too important for us. He shepherds us to exactly where we need to be. He leads us to the nourishment we need from him – the green pastures and quiet waters. He gives us the living water, himself, the Christ, the one who quenches our deep spiritual thirst for completeness – complete holiness and righteousness. And as our Shepherd, he stays with us. With him by our side, we fear no evil because he fights all of it off, like a shepherd protecting his flock from the wild animals that look to devour them. He promises to shepherd us to eternal rest with him, rest from all our enemies, rest from all our temptations and sins, rest from every illness and disease and virus, rest in our eternal home of heaven. With a God like this, a Protector and Guide like this, can we do any less than bow our knees to him, to follow him and his voice, which we do in worship?

After so many positive reasons to joyfully come and worship the LORD and sing praises and thanksgiving to him, there is another part to David’s worship invitation. “Today, if only you would hear his voice, ‘Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness.’” (verses 7,8) We heard the ingratitude and accusing words of the Israelites against God in our first Bible reading from Exodus. Instead of recounting all the things that God had done for them, how he was rescuing them, how he was their solid Rock throughout the battles of life, how he was guarding and protecting them as their Shepherd, they accused him of trying to kill them. Their hearts went astray from the LORD. They turned away from all the reasons to worship him. In the end, many of them did not enter God’s eternal rest. Sadly, we know that if no invitation is given to our generation, to the people around us, many more will not enter God’s rest either. We are warned of the rejection of God’s invitation.

You were at one time invited to church to worship the LORD. If you’ve been coming to church and worshiping the LORD since you were a kid, you may not remember being extended that invitation. Instead, your parents or grandparents or whoever brought you to church simply wanted you to have this great God, this great King above all gods. They probably didn’t give you a choice, but much like making you go to school, making you brush your teeth, making you eat your vegetables, they brought you to worship so that you would know the LORD and worship him in the hopes that you would pass that invitation on for more to enter God’s rest.

If you did not grow up going to church and worshiping the LORD, then you probably remember how the invitation to worship the LORD came to you. Maybe it was your own desire to learn what this church thing was about, why people you knew went there and seemed to have a joy about them that you wanted. Maybe it was an invitation that came through a casual conversation with a friend. Maybe it was a time when you were hurting and someone reached out to you so that you could have the Rock of your salvation, a permanent refuge and safe harbor in the storms of life. Maybe it was talking with a neighbor or a coworker or a cold call – at your doorstep, on the phone, online. Think about how they invited you. What made you take them up on their invitation? Use that to go on and invite others to worship our LORD so that they can know their joys and comforts and certainty we know and have.

We have a unique opportunity right now to invite people to worship. Roughly 75% of the people in our immediate community are not holding a worship service today. Some of them may be wanting to come and hear of something solid in life, such as the Rock of our salvation. Others may be afraid to leave their homes or think it’s best not too. For them, we can invite them to worship simply by sharing a link and having them join us online. In uncertain and scary times such as these, we all need the Rock of our salvation.

You may not want to go a capella and sing your invitation to someone, but you want people to come and worship the LORD just like you do. You don’t want anyone left out from entering the LORD’s rest. You want them to have the Rock of their salvation, their Good Shepherd, their Creator and Sustainer, in their lives. You know the great things the LORD has done for you. Articulate these things with your voice. Make this invitation your own. Tell people why you worship the LORD. Sing it, if that’s the best way for you to express it. Like David, extend the invitation for people to worship the LORD for all the reasons that you do. Extend that invitation and pray for God to bless it as he uses it to add to the great multitude of believers who know Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Amen.