

Confirmation Sunday – June 3, 2018
Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church

Pastor Charles Heup

Psalm 95:1-7 (NIV)

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. (2) Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. (3) For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. (4) In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. (5) The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. (6) Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; (7) for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care ...

Blessings in the name of the Lord – the Rock of your Salvation, the great God, the great king above all gods, your maker, your God and your Shepherd.

Who is your God? Who are you? I'd like each of you to ponder those questions for just a moment. Who is your God? Who are you? Later in our service, Grady will confess his faith and expresses his desire to become a member of this congregation. When he does this, he will be telling us who his God is and who he is. But, before he does that, I'd like to invite all of you to ponder the words of Psalm 95 with me for a few moments as we answer the questions: *Who is your God and Who are you?*

“Who is your God?”

The Psalmist proclaims, “the Lord is your God.” But who is the Lord and what has he done for you? The psalmist will explain.

The Psalmist invites us to *sing for joy to our Lord and to shout to the Rock of our salvation*. Above all else, the Psalmist wants us to understand and believe that our God is the Lord – the God of free and faithful grace who is faithful to his promises. That's really what the word, *Lord*, implies. Our God is a God who has gone into action for us and fills us with joy! He gives us a reason to lift up our voices because he is the solid foundation for our salvation – he has provided us with a rescue from our enemies and with eternal security.

It's no wonder the Psalmist invites us to **come before him with thanksgiving and to extol him with song**. Because he has conquered all our foes, we are compelled to confess with the Psalmist: **the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods**. Who is your God? Your God is the one and only true God who rules over all things for your benefit.

The Psalmist proclaims the extent of his rule when he declares: **In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. (5) The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land**. Who is your God? Your God is the creator God – the maker of heaven and earth. As he is described by the Psalmist, your God is powerful and present everywhere. The Psalmist says even more: **Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker**.

Who is your God? Your God is your maker who is worthy of your worship and praise. God created us to love and serve him. We are accountable to him for all that we have and all that we are.

Anyone who is familiar with the opening pages of Scripture has already been introduced to the Lord, God whom the Psalmist urges us to sing to, shout to, worship and bow down to. Genesis 1: 1 simply declares,

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Between verse 1 and verse 31 of Genesis chapter 1, we find the account of the 6 days of creation in which God called this world into existence with his word and created human beings in his holy, sinless image. Verse 31 sums up the account by saying: **God saw all that he had made and it was very good.** (NIV)

Unfortunately, we can no longer make that claim – everything in the world that God made is no longer very good including you and me. The apostle Paul explains how God’s creation was ruined: **sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.** (Romans 5:12 NIV)

Paul’s words combined with other passages from the Scriptures such as Psalm 51:5 **Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me** (NIV) are a powerful reminder of the fact that you and I were dead in our trespasses and sins before we even took a breath of air.

For a moment, I’m going to move away from the question, “Who is your God?” so we can focus on the question, “Who are you?” The fact of the matter is that each of us is obligated to confess, I am a poor miserable sinner who deserves nothing from the God who created me to love and serve him and to live forever with him in glory because as the Prophet Isaiah says: **your iniquities have separated you from your God.** (Isaiah 59:2 NIV)

Now let’s go back once more to our first question: Who is your God? Do you recall how the Psalmist described our God? He called him **the Lord, the Rock of our salvation.** He spoke of him as **the great God and the great King above all gods.**

Previously I made this statement: *Above all else, the Psalmist wants us to understand and believe that our God is the Lord – the God of free and faithful grace who is faithful to his promises. That’s really what the word, Lord, implies. Our God is a God who has gone into action for us and fills us with joy! He gives us a reason to lift up our voices because he is the solid foundation for our salvation – he has provided us with a rescue from our enemies and with eternal security.*

Let’s take a closer look at that statement. Our God is the Lord – the God of free and faithful grace who is faithful to his promises. When sin entered the world – the creator of the world made a promise to rescue the world from sin. This promise was because of God’s underserved love for his fallen creation. It was an evidence of his grace -- his willingness to bless us and treat us in ways that we do not deserve.

Many of you may have worshipped last week and if you did, you may have heard the words of John 3 in your worship service. Those words speak of the actions the Lord God took to give us joy: (John 3:6, 14-17 NIV) **Flesh gives birth to flesh but the Spirit gives birth to spirit ...(14) Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, (15) that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him." (16) For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (17) For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.**

In our worship service, here at Good Shepherd last week I summarized those words of John in this way:

The Triune God Has Provided Your Salvation

1. The Father gave his Son for you
2. The Son died on the cross for you
3. The Holy Spirit gives you life

That's another way that you can answer the question, "Who is your God?" isn't it.

Dear friends – your God has provided your salvation. That's why you can confess with the Psalmist:
The Lord is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care ...

And that's why you can come before the Lord with songs of joy and loud shouts. That why we desire to bow down in worship and to kneel before the Lord our maker. In the words of Grady's confirmation verse, we do this because: ***The Lord is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care ...***

Who are you?

By God's grace you are a dearly loved child of God – you are a people belonging to him that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (cf. 1 Peter 2:9) You are a people who together with the Psalmist are able to rejoice in the loving care of a God Shepherd:

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. (2) He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, (3) he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. (4) Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. (5) You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. (6) Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (Psalm 23 NIV)

For a number of years, I've given the students in my confirmation classes an opportunity to select the passage that will be printed on their confirmation certificates. The only guideline I give them is that the passage should be one that is meaningful to them. When I gave Grady that opportunity this year, he selected Psalm 95:7
The Lord is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care ...

That verse is a wonderful answer to the questions, "Who is your God" and "Who are you?" That makes it a wonderful confirmation verse. It is my prayer that Grady, as well as each of you, might make that verse your own and always confess, "The Lord is my God and I am his – a lamb under his care." Amen.