

Make His praise glorious

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Psalm 66

Shout with joy to God, all the earth!
Sing the glory of his name;
make his praise glorious!
Say to God,
'How awesome are your deeds!
So great is your power
that your enemies
cringe before you.
All the earth bows down to you;
they sing praise to you,
they sing praise to your name.'
Come and see what
God has done,
how awesome his works
in man's behalf!

This writer of this Psalm is consumed with the glory of God – so much so that His passionate worship cannot simply be contained within his own heart – it must spill out into evangelistic zeal, and a call to the nations to glorify the Lord.

I want to focus in on just the first 5 verses of this Psalm. There is a beautiful progression of worship within these verses, each one giving us a different way to respond to the glory of God: 'shout', 'sing', 'say', 'bow', 'come and see'.

v.1: "Shout".

"Shout with joy to God, all the earth!" – A shout is a great way of responding to glory. We see it the world over – whether it's in sport or music, crowds let out a great shout when they witness something they consider to be glorious. A shout requires effort, and a lot of breath. It is the loudest noise a human body can make. It is a cry of glory. But the glory of God is worth far more than a shout from a packed football stadium or concert venue. The worth of God commands a shout from every corner of the globe: "Shout with joy to God, all the earth!"

v.2 "Sing".

"Sing the glory of His name;" we're urged in verse 2, "Make His praise glorious!". That is a fantastic poetic call to all lead worshippers. Yes, sing the *goodness* of His name, the mercy and the kindness. But do not forget to sing the *glory* of His name – the greatness and the grandeur, the majesty and the magnificence. "Make His praise glorious!" In the church we're getting better at making His praise passionate – and we're learning to make His praise both intimate and reverent. But we must also make His praise glorious – songs and sounds that tell of the glory of God. Worship that reflects the glory of God. We are a singing church – singing is a beautiful way of 'colouring in the picture'. A shout is a powerful black and white statement. But singing is a colourful expression – many hints and shades that help us paint a fuller picture of God as we worship. I love the way The Message phrases this verse: "Sing songs to the tune of His glory, set glory to the rhythms of His praise."

v.3 "Say".

"Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!" In the last verse we sang the glory of His *name* – in other words, we worshipped God for the very essence of who He is. This is always the first stage of worship – before we move on to tell of all the things He has done, we simply worship Him for His name – for the core of who He is - that in his holiness and otherness, wrath and righteousness, might and mercy, He alone is God. But now we begin to say to God how awesome His deeds are. To 'say' is great a way of recounting the wonderful works of God. We start at creation, we move through the history of the people of God – the miracles and the mercies of His dealing with us. And we come to the cross – the deed above all deeds, the mercy of all mercies. And we do not stop there – from that day to this, as we look over our own lives, and God's gracious dealings with us,

we can say "how awesome are your deeds".

v.4 "Bow".

"All the earth bows down to You". The first 3 verses of this Psalm are like an orchestration of praise – we start with a shout, bring it down to a song, then quieten ourselves further and simply use speech to tell God why we worship Him. But now comes the final part of this orchestration, and no sound is necessary. We simply 'bow'. To bow is the ultimate outward sign of inner reverence. It is a powerful way of telling God we think He is glorious. In our western culture we do not typically 'bow'. I love that fact - for it means we can keep this posture as a worship response, exclusively used for God, and God alone. What a beautiful thing.

Phillipians 2 tells us that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, and here, back in the Psalms, the songwriter has had the very same insight: "All the earth bows down to You". What a reflection of glory, and what a pointer to the worth of our God – that one day every knee will be bowed low in worship and submission.

v.5: "Come and see".

"Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works on man's behalf!" The glory of God causes us to shout and to sing. It inspires us to speak our worship, and to bow down low. But there is still something that must be done if we are to complete the integrity of our worship. We must pick ourselves up off the ground, and go and tell others of His great glory. "Come and see what God has done." True worship always overflows into evangelistic passion. As John Piper tells us in his book 'Let the nations be glad': "Worship is both the fuel and the goal of missions". In other words, worship fuels the fire for mission – when we truly care about the glory of God, something in us simply has to tell others. And worship is also the goal of mission – the very reason we go is that there might be more worshippers of Jesus.

Let us join with Psalmist, being so consumed with the glory of God, that everywhere we go, and in everything we do, we overflow with a passion for His glorious name.