

# Serve with Gladness

By Steve Pruitt

*Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing.*

Psalm 100:2 NKJV

In order to pay off a debt or to make restitution for a theft, the Hebrew people would often sell themselves into slavery to other Hebrews. In the law, God gave Moses specific instructions concerning Hebrew slaves serving Hebrew masters. In summary, a Hebrew slave was to serve his master for six years and the seventh year was to be set free. However, if the servant loved his master and wanted to continue with him, the master would take him to the judges, then take him to the door or doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. This opening in the ear would signify that the slave or servant chose for love's sake to stay with his master and serve him forever.

This type of service is what the Psalmist had in mind when he penned the words to Psalm 100:2. The Hebrew word used for serve in Psalm 100:2 means to work, be enslaved or to be in bond-service. Because of the injustices of the past and even the present, this particular type of service seems morally and ethically unacceptable. However, the Psalmist qualifies how this service to the Lord is to be wrought; *with gladness*. The Hebrew word for gladness means blithesomeness or glee, exceedingly glad, joy, or pleasure or rejoicing.

So in essence, our bond-service to God is wrought, not by coercion, but from our deep love for him and our desire to serve him forever. It is the giving of our body as a living sacrifice; our reasonable service (worship). This service is to be done with exceeding gladness, joy and pleasure. The Psalmist accentuates this point by following with *Come before His presence with singing*.

The Hebrew word for singing in Psalm 100:2 should actually translate a shout for joy. Coming into God's presence with a shout of joy is an outward expression of the gladness and joy with which we have bonded ourselves to him for life. And why should we not express our joy to the one we joyfully serve? He has provided for us all the things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). King David knew this well when he wrote, *You will show me the path of life; In Your presence* (the same word as presence in Psalm 100:2) *is fullness of joy* (the same word as gladness in Psalm 100:2); *At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore*. Psalm 16:11

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## **Scriptures for meditation:**

- Exodus 21:1-6
- Deuteronomy 15:12-17
- Romans 12:1
- Romans 6:22