

## **Psalm 100**

1-2 On your feet now—applaud God!  
Bring a gift of laughter,  
sing yourselves into his presence.

3 Know this: God is God, and God, God.  
He made us; we didn't make him.  
We're his people, his well-tended sheep.

4 Enter with the password: "Thank you!"  
Make yourselves at home, talking praise.  
Thank him. Worship him.

5 For God is sheer beauty,  
all-generous in love,  
loyal always and ever.

## **Homily: A Living Doxology**

I have a lot of favorite things about Millbrook Baptist Church. Actually, that's not technically true. Let me try again. I have ONE favorite thing about Millbrook Baptist Church, and about a million second-favorite things about Millbrook Baptist Church.

In the spirit of honesty, I'll reveal to you that my favorite thing is not prophetic, nor thought-provoking, and it's not even original. It's just, um, it's...It's green beans. That's right, green beans. Because anytime we have a community meal, there's always green beans: some with French's fried onions, some cooked in lard, some made healthy, some with almonds – But all of them delicious. All of them made with care.

And all of them reflecting the generosity and goodness of the ones who shared them. And all of them on my plate!!!

There you have it. Your preacher is as deep as plate of green beans.

But...I did say I had about a million close-seconds. And one of those close seconds is this community's commitment to a particular attitude of worship. For 150 years, the DNA of Millbrook worship has not been characterized by a particular style or tradition, but rather by the idea that worship is first and foremost an authentic gift for God. The worship of God is not something to be captured in a net like a butterfly, nor made into a performance, nor tamed and tamped down, nor even to be archived and documented like a timesheet.

The worship of God is a gift – it is given in a moment, one that is fleeting, even, and this gift is set free, allowed to float through space and time. We offer our expression of worship with all that we are, even our emotions. This means that each week, we join our Creator with all our sensibilities AND shortcomings; with all our joys AND sorrows; with all of our confidence AND vulnerability. And the hope of this place is that we can always do that in safety – because here in this space we meet a God who meets us where we are, and proclaims: You are loved. “Always. Always. Always.”

It's fitting then, that on this, the third Sunday of Pentecost, and our first real Sunday of Ordinary time (we celebrated graduations last week), today's lection would be something extraordinary, the Granddaddy of Praise Psalms, Psalm 100. I believe every word of this Psalm is fantastic. And I could spend all day breaking down every verse. But I promised you a homily, not a dissertation. So let me focus on one phrase that jumps out: “Make yourselves at home, talking praise.”

The psalmist tells us that God is good. And that this goodness, God's goodness, is our source. God's goodness created us. And that good source, that thing we call God, invites us into Their presence. In other words, God is just like those good folk who take the time to cook good green beans. Because let me tell you, if you take time to make green beans the right way, then you are also the kind of person who tells any visitor to your house, "Come on in! Make yourself at home!" And before you know it, that neighbor agrees, lounging on a Lazy-Boy, drink in hand, belly full, and no longer feeling like a visitor. I believe that's what the Psalmist is trying to tell us today: God wants each and every one of us to be at home in God's house.

When we come into God's house just as we are; when we make ourselves comfortable enough to laugh, or to cry, or to sing, or even to sing off key and out of tune and still be heard; or to make known the very things that are on our hearts; we worship the LORD. And we worship the LORD like we are giving a gift, or like people who know how to prepare good green beans!!!

So...Millbrook Baptist Church, I want to do two things. First, I want to thank you. Over the last few years, you've led offertory prayers and invocations – these have been YOUR WORDS. You have shared readings, memories, and insight that have informed YOUR faith. You have made known by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving your thoughts to the LORD. You have sung like you wanted to be heard. You have made yourselves at home talking praise. Thank you. That matters.

And that brings me to my second point. Some might say that we let our worship distract us from our purpose: don't we have a church to run, and missions to complete, and a world to fix?

We do indeed.

BUT... I would argue that we will NOT become the people God has called us to be until we find a way to first be comfortable in the presence of God – that is – we cannot be God’s people if we’re too scared to sit in God’s Lazy Boy.

For when we experience God’s hospitality, we begin to realize our collective gifts, and our collective possibilities. And God is no longer the obstacle to those goals, but rather God is the catalyst. I believe, with all my heart, that worship is the beginning of transformation. It is not idleness. It is not meaningless. It is our purpose and our source and our start.

And when we worship our Maker, we experience the kind of transformation that makes this world a better place. We know God. And we know one another. And we know love. And empathy. And even pain. And the Spirit compels us to act.

Millbrook Baptist Church, when we worship: we breathe, we exist, we develop, we grow, we become God’s people.

So loosen up. Get comfortable. Put on your elastic waistband to make room for all those varieties of green beans. We have a God to praise. And a doxology that needs to be more than sung – we have a doxology that needs to be lived.

Amen.