

## **Psalm 100: To the tune of Doxology (Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow)**

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| 1 All people that on earth do dwell,<br>Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.  | 4 O enter then his gates with praise,<br>Approach with joy his courts unto:<br>Praise, laud, and bless his name always,<br>For it is seemly so to do. |
| 2 Him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell,<br>Come ye before him and rejoice.  |   |
| 3 Know that the Lord is God indeed;<br>Without our aid he did us make:<br>We are his flock, he doth us feed,<br>And for his sheep he doth us take. | 5 For why? the Lord our God is good,<br>His mercy is for ever sure;<br>His truth at all times firmly stood,<br>And shall from age to age endure.      |

### **Preface to *The Obedience of a Christian Man* by William Tyndale**

(October 7, 1528)

GRACE, peace, and increase of knowledge in our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you, reader, and with all that call on the name of the Lord unfeignedly and with a pure conscience. Amen.

Let it not make you despair, nor yet discourage you, O reader, that it is forbidden you, upon pain of life and goods, or that it is breaking the king's peace, or treason to his highness, to read the word of your soul's health. But much rather, be bold in the Lord, and comfort your soul: forasmuch as you are sure, and have an evident token through such persecution, that it is the true word of God, which is ever hated by the world. Nor was his word ever without persecution, (as you see in all the stories of the Bible, both in the New Testament and also in the Old), nor can it be, no more than the sun can be without light.

And contrariwise, you may be just as sure that the pope's doctrine is not of God, which (as you see) is so agreeable to the world, and is so received by the world. Or rather, the pope's doctrine receives the world and the pleasures of the world. It seeks nothing but the possessions of the world, and the authority in the world, and to bear rule in the world. It persecutes the word of God, and with all wiliness, it drives people from it. With false and sophistical reasons, it makes them afraid of it. Indeed, it curses and excommunicates them, and brings them to believe they are damned if they look at it. That is but doctrine to deceive men. It moves the blind powers of the world to slay with fire, water, and sword, all who cleave to God's word. For the world loves what is the pope's, and it hates what is chosen out of the world to serve God in the Spirit. As Christ says to his disciples, John 15.19, "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but I have chosen you out of the world, and therefore the world hates you."

Another comfort you have is that, just as the weak powers of the world defend the doctrine of the world, so the mighty power of God defends the doctrine of God. You will evidently perceive it, if you call to mind the wonderful deeds which God has ever wrought for his word in extreme necessity, since the world began, beyond all man's reason. These are written, (as Paul says, Romans 15.4) "for our learning, (and not for our deceiving), that we through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope." The nature of God's word is to fight against hypocrites. It began at Abel, and it has ever since continued, and shall continue, I do not doubt, until the last day.

Hypocrites always have the world on their side, as you see in the time of Christ. They had the elders, that is, the rulers of the Jews on their side. They had Pilate and the emperor's power on their side. They also had Herod on their side. Moreover they brought all their worldly wisdom to bear, and all that they could think, or imagine to serve their purpose. First, to frighten the people with, they excommunicated all that believed in him, and put them out of the temple, as you see in John 9.34. Secondly, they found the means to have him condemned by the emperor's power, and made it treason to Caesar to believe in him. Thirdly, they sought to have him hanged as a thief or a murderer, which, after their fleshly-wisdom, was a cause above all causes that no man should believe in him. For the Jews take it for a sure token of everlasting damnation, if a man is hanged. For it is written in their law, Deut 21.22-23 (Gal 3.13) "Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree." Moses also in the same place commands, if any man is hanged, to take him down the same day and bury him, for fear of polluting or defiling the country; that is, lest they bring the wrath and curse of God upon them.

Therefore, the wicked Jews themselves, with so venomous a hatred, persecuted the doctrine of Christ. They did all they could to shame him, though they would have had Christ continue to hang on the cross and rot there, (as he should have done by the emperor's law), yet for fear of defiling their Sabbath, and bringing the wrath and curse of God upon them, they begged Pilate to take him down, John 19, which went against themselves.

Finally, when they had done all they could, and all that they thought was sufficient, and when Christ was in the heart of the earth, and so many bills and pole-axes were around him to keep him down, and when it was past man's help, then God helped. When man could not bring him back again, God's truth fetched him again. The oath that God had sworn to Abraham, to David, and to other holy fathers and prophets, raised him up again, to bless and save all that believe in him. Thus the wisdom of the hypocrites became foolishness. Look, this was written for your learning and comfort.

How awfully were the children of Israel locked in Egypt! In what tribulation, suffering, and adversity they were in! Also the land that was promised to them was far off, and full of great cities, walled with high walls up to the sky, and inhabited with great giants. Yet God's truth brought them out of Egypt, and planted them in the land of the giants. This was also written for our learning. For there is no power against God's, nor any wisdom against God's wisdom. He is stronger and wiser than all his enemies. What did it help Pharaoh to drown the male children? So little (I fear not) shall it at the last help the pope and his bishops, to burn our male children who manfully confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, and that there is no other name given to men to be saved by, as Peter testifies in Acts 4.12.

Who dried up the Red sea? Who slew Goliath? Who did all those wonderful deeds which you read about in the Bible? Who delivered the Israelites evermore from thralldom and bondage, as soon as they repented and turned to God? Faith truly, and God's truth, and trust in the promises which he had made. Read the 11th chapter to the Hebrews for your consolation.

When the children of Israel were ready to despair, because of the greatness and the multitude of the giants, Moses ever comforted them, saying, Remember what your Lord God has done for you in Egypt, his awful plagues, his miracles, his wonders, his mighty hand, his stretched out arm, and what he has done for you up to now. He shall destroy them; he shall take their hearts from them, and make

them fear and flee before you. He shall storm them, and stir up a tempest among them, and scatter them, and bring them to nothing. He has sworn; he is true; he will fulfill the promises that he has made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is written for our learning: for truly he is a true God; and he is our God as well as theirs; and his promises are with us, as well as with them; and he is present with us, as well as he was with them. If we ask, we shall obtain; if we knock, he will open; if we seek, we shall find; if we thirst, his truth shall fulfill our desires. Christ is with us until the world's end. Let his little flock be bold therefore. For if God is on our side, what does it matter who is against us, be they bishops, cardinals, popes, or whatever names they may have?

Mark this also, if God sends you to the sea, and promises to go with you, and to bring you safe to land, he will raise up a tempest against you, to prove whether you will abide by his word, and so that you may feel your faith, and perceive his goodness. For if it was always fair weather, and you were never brought into such jeopardy, from where his mercy alone could deliver you, then your faith would be but a presumption, and you should be ever unthankful to God, and merciless to your neighbor. If God promises riches, the way to them is poverty. Whom he loves, he chastens: whom he exalts, he casts down: whom he saves, he first damns. He brings no man to heaven, except he sends him to hell first. If he promises life, he slays first: when he builds, he first tears all down. He is no patcher; he cannot build on another man's foundation. He will not work until all is past remedy, and brought to such a case, that men may see how his hand, his power, his mercy, his goodness and truth, has wrought it all together. He will let no man partake with him of his praise and glory. His works are wonderful, and contrary to man's works. Who but God delivered his own Son, his only Son, his dear Son, to death, and did that for his enemies' sake, to win his enemy, and to overcome him with love, so that he might see love, and love again, and of love, to do likewise to other men, and overcome them with well doing?

### **Thomas Cranmer's Final Speech, Before His Execution**

(March 21, 1556)

"Every man desireth, good people, at the time of their deaths, to give some good exhortation that others may remember after their deaths, and be the better thereby. So, I beseech, God grant me grace, that I may speak something at this my departing, whereby God may be glorified and you edified.

First, it is a heavy case to see that many folks are so focused upon the love of this false world, and so careful for it, yet for the love of God, or the love of the world to come, they seem to care very little or nothing therefore. This shall be my first exhortation: That you set not overmuch by this false glosing world, but upon God and the world to come. And learn to know what this lesson means, which St James teaches, that the love of this world is hatred against God (James 4:4).

The second exhortation is, that next unto God, you obey your king and queen, willingly and gladly, without murmur and grudging. And not for fear of them only, but much more for the fear of God: Knowing that they are God's ministers, appointed by God to rule and govern you. And therefore whoever resists them, resists God's ordinance.

The third exhortation is, that you love all together like brethren and sisters. For alas, it is a pity to see what contention and hatred one Christian man hath to another; not taking each other, as sisters and brothers; but rather as strangers and mortal enemies. But I pray you learn and bear well this one lesson, To do good to all men as much as it depends on you, and to hurt no man, no more than you would hurt your own natural and loving brother or sister. For this you may be sure of, that whoever hates any person, and goes about maliciously to hinder or hurt him, surely, and without all doubt, God is not with that man, even if he thinks himself to be in God's favor.

The fourth exhortation is to those that have great substance and riches of this world, that they will well consider and weigh those sayings of the Scripture. One is of our Saviour Christ himself, who said, "It is hard for a rich man to enter into heaven;" a hard saying, and yet spoken by him, who knew the truth. The second is of St John, whose said, "He that hath the substance of this world, and seeth his brother in necessity, and shutteth up his mercy from him, how can he say, he loveth God?"

Much more might I speak of every part; but time does not suffice. I just want to put you in remembrance of things. Let all those that are rich, ponder well those sentences; for if they ever had any occasion to show their charity, they have now at this present, the poor people being so many, and resources so dear. For though I have been in prison, yet I have heard of the great poverty of the poor. Consider, that that which is given to the poor is given to God; whom we have not otherwise present corporally with us, but in the poor.

And now, as I am come to the last end of my life, here upon hangeth all my life passed, and my life to come, either to live with my Saviour, Christ in heaven, in joy, or else to be in pain ever with wicked devils in hell; and I see before mine eyes presently either heaven ready to receive me, or hell ready to swallow me up; I shall therefore declare unto you my very faith, how I believe, without color or posturing. For now is no time to dissemble, whatsoever I have written in times past.

First, I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and every article of the Catholic faith, every word and sentence taught by our Saviour Christ, his Apostles and Prophets, in the Old and New Testament.

And now I come to the great thing that troubles my conscience more than any other thing that ever I said or did in my life: and that is, the setting abroad of writings contrary to the truth. Which here now I renounce and refuse, as things written with my hand contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and written for fear of death, and to save my life, if it might be. That is, all such works, which I have written or signed with my own hand, since my degradation; wherein I have written many things untrue. And for so much as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, therefore my hand shall first be punished. For if I may come to the fire, it shall be first burned. And as for the Pope, I refuse him, as Christ's enemy and antichrist, with all his false doctrine."

Fire being now put to him, he stretched out his right hand, and thrust it into the flame, and held it there a good time, before the fire came to any other part of his body; where his hand was seen of every man sensibly burning, crying with a loud voice, 'This hand hath offended.' As soon as the fire got up, he was very soon dead, never stirring or crying all the while.