

Cultivating our Appetite for God: Telling
Psalm 96, Proverbs 15.4, James 3.1-5
Sermon Outline

Introduction: God is an acquired taste. Talking him up in the hostile and indifferent world is part of how we cultivate our appetite for him.

I) God wants us to talk him up

A) Psalm 96 – loaded with imperatives to vocalize

Sing...sing...sing...bless...tell...declare...ascribe...ascribe...ascribe...worship...say...

II) Why?

A) Because he is worth talking about

Ps 96.3, 4-6

Everybody is religious

Evangelism says (gently, contextually), “Yahweh can beat the socks off your god.”

B) Because what he is about to do is so good

Ps 96.1, 11-13

Cosmic change of administration

Evangelism: “You have got to meet this amazing Person”

One reason our evangelism is often so weak...

C) Because when we talk him up we find him

Our words have a life of their own

- *James 3: bit...rudder*
- *Pvbs 15.4: tree of life*

Even more so God’s words

III) God helps our hearts and words

A) Our problem with words

B) God’s help

Ps 96.2: ...tell of his salvation from day to day

Ps 96.8:...bring an offering

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Psalm 96 is full of commands to verbalize. How many are there? How do their meanings differ?
- 2) Notice that telling about the Lord is to be done by the whole world and to the whole world. Where do we see this in the psalms? How good are you at talking about God outside of church (at school, work, with neighbors)? What inhibits you?
- 3) Psalm 96 gives us at least two reasons for talking up the LORD (see vv. 4-6 and then vv. 11-13). What are the two reasons and why are they good reasons?
- 4) What do James 3:1-5 and Proverbs 15:4 teach us about the power of human words? Why are our words so powerful? Try to illustrate from your experience the impact of words—either your words or the words of other people.
- 5) Reflect on the following: “If our words have a life of their own, then what about God’s words? When we speak up about God in the hostile or indifferent world, God himself speaks up. And when he speaks up, things change. Sometimes, sadly, his words harden those who hear them (as happened with Pharaoh in Moses’ day). But often they soften people and draw them towards him.” Think of/tell stories of the power of God’s word to harden or soften people—including yourself.
- 6) What, according to James 3 is the relationship between our words and our hearts? What does this connection imply about the difficulty of simply deciding (a) to be nicer in what you say and (b) to be bolder in your evangelism?
- 7) Psalm 96.8 urges us to ‘bring an offering’ into God’s courts. What offering, according to Hebrews 10.1-10, did Jesus bring into God’s courts. What hope does this give to us as we seek to bring our hearts and words more joyfully into God’s service?