A Reason to Give Thanks
Psalm 95:1-6

1 Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! 2 Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! 3 For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. 4 In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. 5 The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. 6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

As we sit here today on this Sunday before thanksgiving, one may ask what reason do I have to give thanks. The unemployment rate is as high as it has been in years – The divorce rate is as high as it has been in years – Our country’s financial situation seems to be getting worse. Our school districts are not teaching our kids. There is one thing to complain about after the next. One may ask what reason do I have to give thanks. But we have to understand that even in the direst of circumstances we always have something to give God thanks about – I don’t care how much you can point to that, which is bad from your perspective, there is always a reason to give thanks.

It reminds me of the man who had his wife to iron his pants. He was so excited to wear these pants they were new pants and he couldn’t wait to show them off. While ironing his pants she burned them so bad he could not wear them. His immediate feeling was anger and to get mad at her, but he stopped to think about it and said, “Lord I thank you that my legs were not in those pants.” He understood that there is always a reason to give God thanks.

In our text today, the Psalmist helps us see why we ought to give thanks to God.

1. Give thanks to God because we are invited to.

Psalm 95:1 Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! 2 Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

We have an invitation to enter God’s presence with praise. We are invited to Praise him with an assembly of singing and noise making or shouting. Two times in the first two verses we are invited to make a joyful noise.

It’s important for us to know that the Psalms is one of the books of poetry. So often the psalms are written poetically in order to bring emphasis to the instruction of the psalm. For instance,

1 Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; this is parallel to the first line in verse 2 which says...

2 Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; - this parallel to the first line brings emphasis to the what aspect of the invitation which is to sing praises to the Lord with thanksgiving.

The second line in verse 1 says let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

The parallel of this line is the second portion of verse 2 which says, let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise! – this is emphasizing the how and the object of our praise.
So... what are we to do? Sing praises with thanksgiving. How are we to do it? By making a joyful noise.

This is important because the word of God is not just words thrown on paper, it is spoken with intentionality to bring emphasis to what God wants us to learn about Him.

The word noise is an intriguing word in the Hebrew. It occurs forty-two times throughout the OT, the most frequent usages are in Psalms.

The primary meaning is “to raise a noise” by shouting or with an instrument, especially a horn or the traditional ram’s horn, the “shofar”. It is what they blew when they were in front of the walls of Jericho and the walls came down. This word is used in this sense in rituals of the Israelite tabernacle to describe the exaltation of the people of Israel when the ark of the covenant was brought to the camp. Later, the same root word is used to describe the exaltation of the people when David brings the ark to Jerusalem. The usage implies an encouragement by the whole earth to praise God. It is also used to describe the shout of victory over an enemy. The root word רועא is also used for cries of complaint and distress. However, the most common usage of all is in signals for war and war cries.

So here the psalmist who wants to invite the reader to make this RUA, make this noise, but this is not the noise of war, this is not the noise of complaint, this is the noise of joy. Make a joyful RUA. We could be shouting about the unrest that plagues our city streets, we could be shouting to express our disapproval of the political situation, we could be shouting to cry out that disease is wreaking havoc in the world. But the Psalmist invites us on the contrary to shout for joy. Make a joyful noise, make a joyful shout. A shout that is not based on the happenings of the world. A shout that is based on the holiness of our God.

I’m so glad this translates as noise, because when the psalmist invites us to sing, I get nervous, because I can’t sing, but when you read on and the description is noise, I’m like, oh yeah I can do that.

My noise may not blend with the worship band, my noise may not mix well with the audio visual team, my noise may not be described as the voice of a song bird, but the psalmist said make a noise and the only requirement is that it is joyful. So, for all of us who sing in Q flat not B flat. You are invited to give thanks, make your noise, express your joy.

Why does verse 1 tell us to “make a joyful noise”? Because, verse 1 goes on to say, “the Lord is the rock of our salvation.” Yahweh is the “Rock,” the fortress, the secure refuge where we are delivered.

Our salvation is not tethered to a helpless object or thought that blows with the wind, our salvation is secularly anchored in the Rock that never moves.

I read a story about a sailor who's ship had wrecked and because of the waves he was thrown upon a rock so he clung to that rock in great danger until the tide went down. Later a friend asked him, “Jim, didn’t you shake with fear when you were hanging on to that rock?” Jim said “Yes, I shook, but the rock didn’t move,”

Psalm 18:2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
In these times when it seems the waves and storms of the world are beating against us, we must cling to the Rock. Many of us are clinging to the stock market, but it keeps moving, many of us are clinging to the government, but it keeps moving, many of us are clinging to success, but it keeps moving, the only rock we can cling to in these times is Jesus. When all others fail, he stands strong. So cling to him as we ride out the storm.

1-Give thanks because we are invited to make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation.

2. Give Thanks to God because no one else compares to His greatness

Psalm 95:3-5 3 For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. 4 In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. 5 The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

V. 3 says for the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods...Israel and surrounding pagan countries would worship idols – and the psalmist says here he is a great king above all gods. The writer was not signifying that there are other gods out there, he was signifying the fact that whatever is taking the place of the true God, whatever lower case gods you have put in place of the Almighty God, does not measure up. He is not signifying the existence of other deity, he is saying that those imposters and phony wood carvings and metal trinkets you are worshipping don’t stand a chance against the one true YAHWEH – self existing omnipresent-omnipotent – omniscient God – Men may treat them like gods, but they are really nothing. You may treat your car like it is a god, but really it is just metal. You may treat your house like it’s a god, but it is really just wood. You may treat a person like a god, but they are really just dust, and all were put into existence by the One who is self-existent.

I like verse 4 and 5 it says...what you see and what you don’t see was all made by God. Verse 4 says, In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. 5 The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

Isaac Newton said this: “Gravity explains the motions of the planets, but it cannot explain who set the planets in motion. God governs all things and knows all that is or can be done. This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent Being.”

What he is saying is science can’t explain God because God created science. I believe science is important and I believe that God gave us science to learn about our planet and universe, but we must never get so scientific that we try to use logic to explain God.

In verse 4 it says, “In his hand” this indicates not only possession but sovereignty. The depths of the earth and the heights of the mountains are picturesque phrases used to indicate the whole earth. He is sovereign overall. He has no equal.

One way to start an argument in Kansas City is to talk about who has the best BBQ. You have the Author Bryant’s crowd – you have the Jack Stack crowd – you have the Gate’s crowd – you have the Q39 crowd, but the only reason why it is a topic for discussion is because they all can be compared to each other they are opponents they are rivals so many have opinions to who is the best.
Well the Psalmist says you don’t have to worry about having a God contest because God has no opponents – You never have to worry about a God final four because God has no rivals – You never have to worry about God feeling threatened because there is none who can measure up – for the LORD is a great God and a great King above all Gods – there is none greater – there is none higher – there is none better – Psalm 113:5 says, “Who is like the Lord?” The answer to this rhetorical question is an absolutely…NO ONE!

1-Give thanks because we are invited to worship the Rock of our salvation.
2-Give thanks because there is no one like our God.
   3. Give thanks to God because it is the only proper response.

Psalm 95:6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

When you receive the invitation and are faced with His greatness all that’s left is worship.

It can also be translated – to prostrate oneself – to lay flat on the ground with your face down – it’s a display of homage to a superior or king – The writer of this psalm is so overwhelmed by the goodness of God, he can’t help but fall on his face.

After having listed all that God is and all that God is responsible for, the psalmist concedes that all that is left to do is worship and bow down. – to fall down on our knees to be flattened by God.

One of the most entertaining boxers of all time was Mike Tyson – to many he was known as iron mike Tyson, This was because of his ability to knock out his opponents often times in the first round. Sports scientist have declared being hit by Mike Tyson in his prime is the same as being hit by a car going 50mph – Basically after being hit by Mike Tyson the only response you would have is to be knocked out. Mike Tyson would hit you so hard you would have no choice but to fall down.

The Psalmist says you think that’s something…when I stood over looking at all God has created, when I stood and looked at all God has done, When I think about the greatness of God, it hits me so hard I have no choice but to fall down---when I think about all the times he kept me out of danger---I have no choice but to worship and bow down – when I think about all the times he provided for me I have no choice but to worship and bow down – When I think about who God is, when I think about the names of God I have no choice but to bow down.

When you incorporate this verse with the opening verse, you see the request to give thanks for what he has done and verse one says we give thanks by singing praises .... one way to see what he has done is to worship his names. His names signify who he is and what he has done.

In Exodus 17:15, After fighting the war against the Amalekites and giving them victory Moses says in this fight God has shown himself to be Jehovah Nissi, The Lord is our banner he goes before us in battle.

In Exodus 15 After crossing the red sea and the people grumbled for water but the water was bitter, God showed Moses a tree to throw in the water and make it sweet, after healing the water. God tells Moses, “I am Jehovah Rapha, God your healer.”
In Ezekiel 48 When Ezekiel was trying to describe the new Jerusalem the best he could do to sum it up is to say The name of the city from that time on will be Jehovah Shammah, the God who is there and where God is there is fullness of joy.

In Genesis 22 When Abraham had a knife in his hand ready to kill his only son and looked over and saw the ram in the bush...all he could say is Jehovah Jireh...Lord you are my provider

In Judges 6 When God used Gideon and a small group of faithful men to drive away the Midianites, all Gideon could say was Jehovah Shalom...God you are peace. He gives peace that passes all understanding...he gives peace in the middle of a storm...he gives peace when the world is turning upside down.

When it looks like our life is full of chaos...when it looks like things are falling apart...

He works all things for our good...It might not look good now...it may not feel good now...but in the midst of it all he is good and it is good to give thanks.

You mind if I make it personal, My grandmother made the best peach cobbler in the world. But when I sat down to eat that peach cobbler, I have to tell you, I was so surprised. Why?

Because I saw my grandmother open peaches and I said yes I like peaches....I saw her put sugar in the bowl and I said yes I love sugar...I saw her put cinnamon in the bowl...and I loved the smell of cinnamon.

But then I saw my grandmother break eggs and put them in a bowl and I tasted the raw eggs and I didn’t like the eggs.

I saw my grandmother put flour in the bowl and I tasted flour and I didn’t like the flour.

I saw my grandmother put baking soda in the bowl I tasted the baking soda and I didn’t like the baking soda.

For the life of me I didn’t see what could come from this...then I started smelling the aroma and I knew something was up.

So, when she sat it down before me and after I had seen all that went into making it, and tasted it for myself....I could truly see that all things work together for my good...the raw egg situations...work together...the white flour situations...work together...the salty situations...work together...The baking soda situations...work together...God mixes them with the peach situations...and the sugar situations and somehow gets glory and uses it for your good.

So now that I have lived for a little while I can see that no matter what is going on around me, I have a reason to give thanks.

Now I can sing with conviction the hymn written by Thomas Ken:

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

And the church said Amen!