



## **Church in a Box**

Sunday, September 6, 2020

Do you ever feel like you're living in two worlds? In one world, things are going great, you're following and trusting in God. And in the other world, things are a disaster. You've made some mistakes, you keep trusting in yourself, and God seems far away.

This is the challenge and the contrast we see in Psalm 95. Bible Scholar Sigmund Mowinckel refers to Psalm 95 as an "Enthronement Psalm."<sup>1</sup> He argues the purpose of this Psalm is to focus on God as King, mighty and absolute, Creator, Provider and Sustainer of all. And additionally, in the ongoing reading of this Psalm, to acknowledge and prioritize God's reenthronement. In reading this Psalm, the purpose is to focus on God's Kingship, and put Him back on the throne of every area of our lives.

For today's Church in a Box, read Psalm 95. I included it on the back in two different versions. And then consider the questions and activity included. I included some additional activity ideas as well. I pray this time is enriching, challenging, and brings a greater sense of Jesus' Kingship in your life. May this be a moment of the "reenthronement" of Jesus for you. – Pastor Molly

### **Read Psalm 95 (on the back)**

Here are some notes:

- Meribah means "strife" and refers to a place in the wilderness.
- At Massah the Israelites quarreled against Moses over the lack of water. It's another name given to the same place. The point is to recognize that the Israelites put God to the test as their provider. This coincided with God testing Israel's commitment to Him as first their deliverer from Egypt, and then their provider in the desert.

### **Note the contrast between the first and second halves of the Psalm. What stands out to you?**

The Israelites, just like us, were real, complex people, with good days and bad days. They had times where it was easy to worship and honor God, and other times where they had trouble trusting Him. They spent years and years in the desert, daily challenged to trust in God ability to provide and to lead. And ultimately, it didn't go well for many of them. A generation of Israelites died in the desert, never being allowed to enter the Promised Land. In contrast, there was also a generation of Israelites born in the desert, growing up daily seeing God provide for their needs, who got to enter the Promised Land in their lifetime.

### **Place yourselves in the shoes of the Israelites for a moment. What aspects of the Psalm do you relate to?**

**By sharing this interesting contrast, what do you think the Psalmist is trying to invoke in us, or cause us to consider?**

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<sup>1</sup> Other Enthronement Psalms include 47, 93, 96-99.

**Write your own version of an Enthronement Psalm.** You can use Psalm 95 as an outline. Consider what challenges you face and acknowledge them. Are there aspects of your life that feel like a desert? Are there other aspects that feel like daily manna from heaven? Consider what characteristics of God you want to glorify. And lastly, consider how you might include areas of your life you want to ensure to “reenthrone” Him in.

**Share your Psalm with God.** Invite Him to respond and speak to you, and take time to consider each area that your life that your trust Him with, and thank Him for His provision. And then consider each area that you struggle trusting Him with, ask for His forgiveness and His help.

### **Additional Activity Ideas**

- Rather than writing your own Psalm, consider drawing or painting a picture of what you see in this Psalm.
- Take this activity on a hike or to a park. Allow the beauty of God’s creation to inform and influence your Psalm.

### **Psalm 95 NIV**

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;  
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.  
<sup>2</sup> Let us come before him with thanksgiving  
and extol him with music and song.  
<sup>3</sup> For the LORD is the great God,  
the great King above all gods.  
<sup>4</sup> In his hand are the depths of the earth,  
and the mountain peaks belong to him.  
<sup>5</sup> The sea is his, for he made it,  
and his hands formed the dry land.  
<sup>6</sup> Come, let us bow down in worship,  
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;  
<sup>7</sup> for he is our God  
and we are the people of his pasture,  
the flock under his care.  
Today, if only you would hear his voice,  
<sup>8</sup> “Do not harden your hearts as you did at  
Meribah,<sup>[a]</sup>  
as you did that day at Massah<sup>[b]</sup> in the  
wilderness,  
<sup>9</sup> where your ancestors tested me;  
they tried me, though they had seen what I  
did.  
<sup>10</sup> For forty years I was angry with that  
generation;  
I said, ‘They are a people whose hearts go  
astray,  
and they have not known my ways.’  
<sup>11</sup> So I declared on oath in my anger,  
‘They shall never enter my rest.’”

### **Psalm 95 The Message**

<sup>1-2</sup> Come, let’s shout praises to GOD,  
raise the roof for the Rock who saved us!  
Let’s march into his presence singing praises,  
lifting the rafters with our hymns!  
<sup>3-5</sup> And why? Because GOD is the best,  
High King over all the gods.  
In one hand he holds deep caves and caverns,  
in the other hand grasps the high mountains.  
He made Ocean—he owns it!  
His hands sculpted Earth!  
<sup>6-7</sup> So come, let us worship: bow before him,  
on your knees before GOD, who made us!  
Oh yes, he’s our God,  
and we’re the people he pastures, the flock  
he feeds.  
<sup>7-11</sup> Drop everything and listen, listen as he  
speaks:  
“Don’t turn a deaf ear as in the Bitter  
Uprising,  
As on the day of the Wilderness Test,  
when your ancestors turned and put *me* to  
the test.  
For forty years they watched me at work  
among them,  
as over and over they tried my patience.  
And I was provoked—oh, was I provoked!  
‘Can’t they keep their minds on God for five  
minutes?  
Do they simply refuse to walk down my  
road?’  
Exasperated, I exploded,  
‘They’ll never get where they’re headed,  
never be able to sit down and rest

