**Responding to God**

 *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!****7****For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today, if you hear his voice,****8****do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,   as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,****9****when your fathers put me to the test    and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.****10****For forty years I loathed that generation    and said, “They are a people who go astray in their heart,
    and they have not known my ways.”*

***11****Therefore I swore in my wrath, “They shall not enter my rest.” (Psalm 95:1-11, ESV)*

 In response to God’s identity and works, our best response is worship. May the Lord bless you dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as we talk today about responses to God. What is the best response to God’s Presence, His Intervention in your life, or His revelation to you? What is our role as we participate in this thing called a relationship with God? We can say that the best response to those questions will always be “to worship Him.” Today, therefore, we’re going to answer those two questions with this message. Again, worship is the best response to God’s self-revelation of His identity and His works. Let’s see those two facets of worship in more detail…

 Our bowing down and our obedience constitute worship unto God. Today we can pick out two extremely important sides of worship from Psalm 95. King David, through it, is teaching us to live a life of worship in two ways: First and foremost, worship happens with an actual worship service (bowing down). This kind of worship was very clear to the Israelites – and there were several verbs that help us to picture how they were supposed to enter God’s temple, the inner rooms, and the inner courts. They had to rejoice before the Lord; they had to raise shouts of joy; they had to have thankful hearts; and they needed to sing psalms in praise of Him. Why? Because God is God- because God is the Creator of all things, and the other gods were literally nothing compared to Him. Specifically, it is clear that God created everything by His hand; this is why it was right to bow and kneel before Him as you would in front of a King. The people were being called to recognize their True Shepherd and their status as sheep.

 Second, God must be worshipped by obedience to His words. In Meribah, the people had complained to Moses that they had no water, and he had gotten frustrated with their complaints and struck the rock twice, instead of trusting God to provide. He was punished because of that and missed entering the Promised Land. God’s people tested Him, and they tried to force Him to prove Himself; and God was not worthy of such treatment. God, in turn came to a place where He had had enough with them, to the point where He gave them what they deserved rather than mercy.

 Notice how influential it is when you express your love with your deeds, and the one to whom you express it feels that they are loved! A simple act of help can change a whole person’s life, whether it is financial help, or just deciding to be next to them so that they would not be alone. On the other hand, how empty are the words of those who consider themselves spiritual and yet whose works do not correspond to their words. Even the most minor faith-expression from those kinds of people feels like a thorn rather than an encouragement.

 Today the Lord wants to teach us to worship Him as a church with joy, singing and praise. He also expects that our faith-life would be lived out both through our words and our practical expression of holiness, namely our deeds.

 May our words, the way we treat people, and our works all be done in God’s love and based on the standard of His Word.

 In response to God’s revelation of His identity and His words, the best answer is to worship through bowing down and obedience of His Word. May the Lord Bless You all. Amen.