

“Can’t Miss a Sunday: God Connection”  
Psalm 122 (NLT)  
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<http://www.sermonspice.com/product/32231/worship-is-not-rocket-science>

SURFREERENDOMDER—worship---God Connection. “Let go about what people thin about you in order to let God know what you think of Him.

In this series “Can’t Miss a Sunday” I want to live in the tension of freedom of letting of myself and surrender to God. SURFREERENDOMDER. I want to make a God connection.

In fact, we should be making God connections every day, but on Sunday, oh, on Sunday---I can’t miss a Sunday because this sanctuary and this place has been consecrated and dedicated as a place to have God connections. A God connection is that time when God reveals Himself to us, personally and individually. The creator of the universe, speaks and connects with us.

I don’t want to miss a Sunday. This week a church member, Bible student and disciple of Jesus gave me a comic strip. It was the comic strip Mutts by Patrick McDonnell. Mooch the cat comes out on the door step and says, “Another New Year!” (Next frame) Another Sunday. (Next frame) Another morning. Yesh another.... (Last frame) unlike any other. And our church member wrote, “Why I can’t miss a Sunday.” Yes, yes, yes! This Sunday will be unlike any other. God is going to be at work in special ways, unique ways that will be unlike last Sunday and unlike the next Sunday. Are we expecting? Do we have that anticipation? Some God-surprises are in store for us each Sunday. Can’t Miss a Sunday.

Today we look at the Old Testament book of Psalms and make a New Testament and even a current correlation.

Psalm 122 is one of the Song of Ascents. The Song of Ascents is the title given to 15 Psalms (Psalm 120-134).

Many believe these psalms were sung by worshippers as they ascended the road to Jerusalem for the 3 pilgrim festivals of Judaism---Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles. Some think that it was sung as they were ascending the steps at the temple.

What song were you singing in the car coming to church? Sarah and I have 3 children. Sarah looks at me and says she has 4 children, but that’s another story. At one phase in our ministry our 3 children were in the following grades/ages. We had a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade son, a daughter in kindergarten and a son who was 1 year old.

Now on Sunday’s I always leave the house earlier than the family. I like to be at church at least an hour before the first worship service begins. Most times this means leaving before Sarah and the children would have gotten out of bed.

I would get in the car to head to church, turn on Christian radio or put on a Christian worship CD and wow---just personally praise and worship on the way to church. I would arrive at the church feeling worshipful and ready to let the Spirit move. I would preach the first service and get really pumped and excited.

It would be sometime after this first service that Sarah and the kids would arrive. So, I would look and see my beloved family coming. I would take one look at Sarah and realize her drive to church wasn't exactly the same as mine. You see it was just me and Jesus driving to church, for her it was a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader, a kindergartner and a 1 year old. She dealt with getting them out of bed, getting them dressed, getting herself dressed, breakfast would be the sacred donuts at church, but she would have to wrestle them in the car, have them fighting and fussing in the car, park in the church parking lot and then enter the church.

Me I'm pumped and revived have already worshiped and then I would ask the question, "Hey hon, how are ya?" And I would get a look similar to this (**IMAGE**). A deer in the headlight.

Let me pause and say...bless you families. And especially single parent families. It not an easy choice to make to come to church. We honor you and thank you for what you go through just to get here. Pray for families coming to church. Pray for pastor's spouses and families.

**Psalm 122:1 I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."**

To be honest, I'm not Sarah always said that! Sarah didn't always give me the "glad" look as she came pulling, pushing and carrying the children as she came to worship.

**Psalm 122:2 And now here we are, standing inside your gates, O Jerusalem.**

Ah, but now you are here. You made it. It might have been a struggle, but you made it. And now you have the opportunity to make the God connection and be glad.

--8:05---- Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love; Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee, opening to the sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; drive the dark of doubt away; Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day!

--9:30----Oh be glad for the Joy of the Lord is your strength

I was glad when we go to God's house. Don't get mad---get glad.

Can't miss a Sunday...Be glad to be here to make a God connection...this day is unlike any other. A God connection---and I'm glad. Second, we can't miss a Sunday because of the God connection to give thanks.

**Psalm 122:4 All the tribes of Israel—the LORD's people—make their pilgrimage here. They come to give thanks to the name of the LORD as the law requires of Israel.**

You've made your pilgrimage here to give thanks to the name of the Lord. And I'm sure for those with children it does indeed seem like a pilgrimage.

But it is here that the God connection happens where we say, "Thank you God--I've made it through another week." Thank you, God, for supplying my needs. Thank you God I can come to a place where there are people here like me. Thank you, God, for sending you son Jesus to die for my sins.

God connections. Be glad--give thanks.

3rd God connection we find in verse 5. **Psalm 122: 5 Here stand the thrones where judgment is given, the thrones of the dynasty of David.**

In the Old Testament these thrones were where judgement was given. The only judgment here in this place would need to come from God. Maybe I can say it this way. The God connection comes in the form of us standing before God in this place where judgement is given. Now there will be a day of final judgement when we all must stand before the throne of God and give an account of our lives.

In this place we stand where a time of inspection takes place. Personal inspection done through with the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

Now I don't know much about fruit and produce, but I always get a little tickled at grocery stores in the fruit and produce section. Have you even notice how people inspect the fruit and produce? They thump it, they pick it up, they touch it, they stare at it, they look underneath it, they rub it, they smell it, they squeeze it, and sometimes when they think no one is looking...taste it.

Inspections are interesting. My dad and his dad before him owned and operated Baldrige Auto Repair. Years ago, at least in Southern Illinois pick up trucks, and other trucks, especially buses had to be inspected. Dad was licensed for this and had as part of his garage a place where the inspections of these trucks took place. The following hangs in my garage and is very special to me: **(Image---Baldrige Auto Repair, Inspection Station)**

It was in this 'test station' that Dad would drive a truck in slam on the brakes, and he had a machine that would indicate whether the braking power was sufficient. He had a machined that would test the headlights to make sure they were properly aimed. He would test the turn signals to see if they were working. I would sometimes help him with this. I would stand in the back of the truck and he would say, "I'm turning on the left turn signal is it working?" And I would say, "Yes, no, yes, no, yes, no." ☺

If it passed inspection then Dad would take a razer scraper and scrape off the old inspection sticker on the driver's side of the inside of the windshield and replace it with a new inspection sticker.

If the truck didn't pass then Dad would let them know what they need to have fixed and they would within a certain amount of time have to get the truck re-inspected.

Friends, part of the God connection is this this sanctuary is kind of test station/an inspection station. There are things each of us need to have corrected, adjusted, and worked on. God can do that; He wants to do that.

God connection---Be glad, give thanks, get inspected. Also verse 6. **Psalm 122:6 Pray for peace in Jerusalem. May all who love this city prosper.**

Certainly, an Old Testament cry, but a Biblical cry for even today. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Sometimes before I can pray for my nation, my state, my county, my city---I must start by pray for myself.

Do I have peace with God? Am I at peace with others?

God gives us peace from our fears, from our worries. Pray for peace. There is a spiritual war inside of you.

An elder Native American was teaching his grandchildren about life. He said to them, "A fight is going on inside me...it is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One wolf represents fear, anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

"The other stands for joy, peace, love, hope, sharing, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, friendship, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith.

"This same fight is going on inside you and inside every other person too," he added.

The Grandchildren thought about it for a minute and then one child asked his grandfather, "Which wolf will win?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed..."

Are you with me? A new year...go on a diet...don't feed the wolf of fear, anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

Be at peace with God and have joy, peace, love, hope, compassion and faith.

Pray for inner peace. Pray that our powerful and mighty God takes control.

The apostle Paul puts it this way.

**Romans 7:18-25**

**<sup>18</sup> ... I want to do what is right, but I can't. <sup>19</sup> I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. <sup>20</sup> But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.**

**<sup>21</sup> I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. <sup>22</sup> I love God's law with all my heart. <sup>23</sup> But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. <sup>24</sup> Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? <sup>25</sup> Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.**

Oh, not slavery to sin, but freedom. Not being controlled by self, but surrender to God.

Here it is---that tension between freedom and surrender, SURFREERENDOMDER

We gather for worship---we can't miss a Sunday for its times for us to be glad, to give thanks, to be inspected and to pray.

---8:05/9:30 We need to ask ourselves...are our eyes on Jesus? Ask "is it well with my soul" and be able to come away saying, "Yes, yes, there is pain, there is hurt, but I can say...It IS well with my soul because I've had a God connection...and now I'm forgiven, comforted, and in His care.

-----11:05 "From the Inside Out" Hillsong Worship

My heart and my soul, I give You control  
 Consume me from the inside out, Lord  
 To love You from the inside out  
 Your will above all else  
 My purpose remains  
 The art of losing myself  
 In bringing You praise  
 Let justice and praise become my embrace  
 To love You from the inside out  
 Lord, my soul cries out

---altar prayer time---