
Be Joyful in the Lord, All You Lands!

**An article for *The Cathedral Times*
by the Very Rev. Sam Candler, *Dean of the Cathedral*
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Most people around my neighborhood know that I like to walk. And I have walked lots of places on this earth. I have walked in the woods. I have walked in the mountains. I have walked on beaches. I have walked in dense urban cities.

And in all those places where I walk, I see things. I see the creative and clean things, and I see the dirty and slovenly things. I see kind people, and I see unkind people. They are all elements of my walking, and I try to observe the holiness in each of those sights.

And I pray. Sometimes my prayer is simply the observation itself. For my soul, to see clearly is to pray. I try to see clearly.

And sometimes I do recite the familiar prayers of my tradition. On seeing me out walking, one might not even know that I have prayers in my earphones, or that I am trying to recall some old prayer from memory.

Lately, one of the prayers I have been using is the old version of the *Jubilate Deo*, good old Psalm 100, which is also a grand invitatory canticle in our office of Morning Prayer. Here is the old version, the Rite 1 version, which is my preference:

*Be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands; *
serve the Lord with gladness
and come before his presence with a song.*

*Be ye sure that the Lord he is God;
it is he that hath made us and not we ourselves; *
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.*

*O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving
and into his courts with praise; *
be thankful unto him and speak good of his Name.*

*For the Lord is gracious;
his mercy is everlasting; *
and his truth endureth from generation to generation. (Psalm 100, the *Jubilate Deo*)*

Newer translations might be a touch more accurate, when they say, in verse two, "It is he that made us, and we are his." But I prefer the old received text, "It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves."

It is the "not we ourselves" clause that gets me. It just hangs out there, without a verb. Scholars may be right that it is missing something. But I like the line that way. When I pray, "not we ourselves," I am admitting that I did not just happen by myself. We did not just suddenly, or even gradually, appear. We are here not by ourselves, but we are here in the fullness of God.

Whatever I see during my walk, is what I speak to when I pray, "Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands." It is the earth, the mountain, the woods, the beach, who is being joyful in the Lord. I am trying to see the joy of the Lord in all this creation. And, yes, I am praying myself to be joyful even in the uglier or unkind things I see.

Most of the land, the earth, really does want to rejoice in the Lord! And, I believe most people really want to rejoice in the Lord, too. "For the Lord is gracious," the psalm says in its last verse. And, here, I like the newer translation, "For the Lord is good."

The Lord is, indeed, good. This has been a morning psalm in Christian liturgy for centuries. It is good to start the day by being reminded that the Lord is good. Thus, this day can be good. This land around me can be good. These people around me can be good. The Lord is good, gracious, and his mercy endures forever.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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