

The Worship of Thanksgiving Psalm 100:1-5

A couple of weeks ago I read something on Facebook that should make us pause and wonder what would happen if it were true. It puts things into some perspective regarding the attitude of our heart toward how grateful we are to God for what He has blessed us with. "What if you woke up only with the things you thanked God for yesterday?"

That's a sobering thought isn't it? But what if it were true? Would we purposely neglect to thank God for that chemistry test or cranky third hour history teacher? How about the overbearing boss or the obnoxious sibling? What if we woke up with only the things we thanked God for yesterday?

Yet how thankful are we for the stuff we have? Oh, we may give thanks at the time we purchased it or when it was given to us as a gift. We open up the doors to a full closet or the dresser drawer, but do we give thanks for the clean clothes we are about to put on? How about the food items in the pantry, refrigerator, and freezer? What about the yard tools or the car that sits in our drive? We get stuff and we decorate our homes. Do we give thanks for those things - regularly? As the automatic sliding doors parts for us to leave the grocery store pushing our shopping cart to our vehicle do we pause to thank God for the various items we just purchased or the money to buy them? How thankful are we - really? And how genuinely thankful are we? Are we thankful for church and the fellowship we have with other Christians or the selection of any number of Bibles or translations we can choose from knowing believers in some countries share a copy with many others? Are we thankful for the warm building and light fixtures when we know Christians in other parts of the world meet in a cave or in some crawl space under a house with only the light of a candle by which to see and to get heat?

I think you get the point. So what is it this

Thanksgiving that we are truly thankful for? What is it that we give praise to God about?

We are a people called to give praise. We read in Psalm 95:2 "Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song."

Psalm 86:9 "All the nations You have made will come and worship before You, O Lord; the will bring glory to Your name."

Psalm 22:23 "You who fear the Lord, praise Him."

Psalm 9:1 "I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonderful deeds."

We feed our dog every day, but she has never once said thanks. Unlike us, animals don't have the capacity to give thanks. We do, but do we? It's not in their nature, but it is in ours and yet we can't help but look around and instead of seeing gratitude, we see entitlement. I deserve this or I deserve that. It reminds me of the time Jesus healed the 10 lepers, but only one came back to give Jesus thanks. Someone suggested nine reasons why they didn't return to give thanks.

One waited to see if the cure was real.

One waited to see if it would last.

One said he would see Jesus later.

One decided that he had never had leprosy.

One said he would have gotten well anyway.

One gave the glory to the priests.

One said, "O, well, Jesus didn't really do anything."

One said, "Any rabbi could have done it."

One said, "I was already much improved."

Paul wrote to the Romans about a very disturbing problem in mankind. It wasn't social issues or financial crises. It didn't have to do with unemployment or the inequality between genders. It wasn't genocide or civil war. I suppose we could conclude that those problems are manifestations of the problem he wrote about. "For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him..." (Romans 1:21a)

There it is. The problem isn't social or civil. The problem is ingratitude, a failure to thank God. Instead of thanking God man started praising himself. Like King Nebuchadnezzar people praise themselves for the kingdom they think they have built themselves. Pride flaunts an ungrateful heart and praises the creature instead of the Creator.

Yet throughout Scripture we are reminded that we are to be thankful people. Our text is one such reminder that God alone deserves our praise. Each verse of Psalm 100 is about thanksgiving.

The recipient of our thanksgiving – v. 1

The reverence in our thanksgiving – v. 2

The realization for our thanksgiving – v. 3

The response in our thanksgiving – v. 4

The reason for our thanksgiving – v. 5

I. THE RECIPIENT OF OUR THANKSGIVING – v. 1

On Thanksgiving Day, Yahoo news posted an article on *How to Teach Gratitude*. Their suggestions are what you would come to expect from someone who doesn't recognize God. It had nothing to do with God. How have you taught or practiced giving thanks. Maybe you go around the table before the turkey is passed and everyone shares something to be thankful for. My Mom liked passing a box of matches around the table and when it was your turn, you took a match, lit it and had to talk as long as the match burned. If we couldn't think of much to say we would tilt it on an angle to make the match burn faster.

Yet something the Yahoo article suggested hit too close to home and was uncomfortable to consider. It suggested that it can be difficult to teach gratitude, especially on a daily basis, when we as adults don't demonstrate it in our own lives. Ouch! But I think the author is quite right, even as Christians we may tend to neglect regular expressions of thanksgiving.

If your Bible has a title for Psalm 100 as does mine, it may say something like "A Psalm, for giving thanks." It begins with a general call to thanksgiving and describes the recipient of that thanksgiving. "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord..." (KJV)

"Shout for joy to the Lord." (NIV)

Here's the thing. There's a lot of noise out in the world today, noise that creates distraction, noise that sounds wholesome, noise that praises self. This verse tells us that we are to shout for joy and that joy is to be directed to only one person. God is to be the recipient of such exuberance.

Thanksgiving then is an expression of gratitude to God in appreciation to Him for all His blessings, His character, and His attributes. Everyone is enjoined to give thanks for God's provisions as He makes the rain fall on the just and the unjust, yet the Christian has all the more reason to give thanks to God for the salvation he has received through Jesus.

The Bible isn't just filled with historical events about real people and real kingdoms. It is laced with praise and thanksgiving by all kinds of people for all kinds of things God has done. The Psalms of David reflect his thanksgiving to God for provision or deliverance.

Noah offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God for deliverance through the flood and the covenant God has made.

Abraham offered a sacrifice to express thanksgiving for God's provision of a ram in exchange for his son and for the promise regarding a covenant.

Following the exodus of Israel from Egypt and the demise of Pharaoh's army, who were all drowned in the Red Sea, Moses took up a song with all the people giving thanks to God for their deliverance.

In the Law given to Moses by God to hand down to the people of Israel, He established a peace or thank offering that was to be a spontaneous expression of

gratitude. Unlike other offerings that had a fixed time of year in which to give the offering this was done at a moment's notice when the soul was stirred for some blessing of God.

Hymn #213

We bring the sacrifice of praise
Unto the house of the Lord.
We bring the sacrifice of praise
Unto the house of the Lord.

And we offer up to You
The sacrifices of thanksgiving;
And we offer up to You
The sacrifices of joy

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Many have gathered this week to give thanks about many things but will ignore giving thanks to the One from whom they received those things. If they do not give thanks to God, to whom do they give thanks? We are to be a people of thanksgiving and we see in our text that this thanksgiving is directed to the Lord.

“Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.”

Thanksgiving is to be a continuous proclamation to God expressed through joyfulness as we loudly, publicly give Him praise. The Psalmist is telling us that we shouldn't stifle our thanksgiving, but that we should openly express praise to God. He is telling us not to subdue our praise to God. Because He has done great things, He deserves unbridled praise. So open up and proclaim it loudly.

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. Amen.

With joyfulness, thank God. People ought to know what we are thankful for and to whom we give our thanks.

This shout of thanksgiving is not just to be from the lips of Israel, but it is to come from all nations for all nations have reason to give God praise because it is through Abraham that all the nations of the world have been blessed. And there is coming a day in which there will be a great gathering of people from every tongue and tribe and nation who will gather around the throne and joyfully shout praise to God.
Revelation 7:9-10
Revelation 19:1-7

Let's never forget that all the glory belongs to God. He deserves our highest praise. He deserves our loudest shouts of hallelujah. All nations are called on to give Him a shout of thanksgiving. He alone is the recipient of our thanksgiving.

Ephesians 5:18-20 “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul gives four results of being filled with the Spirit. The first is communicating with one another with psalms. They are the Old Testament Psalms that were sung with instruments such as harps. Mixed in with the Psalms are hymns and spiritual songs. Hymns were songs composed by other Christians. Through church history we have a collection of tens of 1000's of hymns. I encourage you to pick up a hymnal and use it as a way of daily thanksgiving to God. You can sing or pray the songs back to God as an act of worship and praise. If you think you can't sing make a joyful noise anyway or just read the words. They are rich in doctrine and filled with thanksgiving.

There is a second result of being filled with the Spirit. As we communicate with the Lord we are to sing and make melody in our heart. This was often done with a stringed instrument. (Hymn 502)

I have a song that Jesus gave me,
It was sent from Heav'n above;
There never was a sweeter melody,
'Tis the melody of love.

Refrain

*In my heart there rings a melody,
There rings a melody with Heaven's harmony;
In my heart there rings a melody,
There rings a melody of love.*

'Twill be my endless theme in glory,
With the angels I will sing;
'Twill be a song with glorious harmony,
When the courts of Heaven ring.

“Church music, then, should be a means of believers’ ministering to each other, and singing should be a means of worshiping the Lord.”

Do the songs we sing express thanksgiving to God or more importantly, do the songs we sing come from hearts filled with thanksgiving?

The third result from Ephesians 5 of being filled with the Spirit is *always* giving thanks to God. This is to be done continuously for all things. It isn't a one-time event or even just to be done once a week. Psalms 34:1 “I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.”

Isaac Watts wrote a beautiful hymn enjoining us to praise. (We're Marching to Zion, #416)
Come, we that love the Lord,
And let our joys be known.
Join in a song with sweet accord,
And thus surround the throne
Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God;
But children of the heavenly King,
May speak their joys abroad.

I Thessalonians 5:18 exhorts us to “give thanks in all circumstances for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

When bad things happen, many people want to blame God, not give Him thanks. But when we recognize that even in this it is meant for our good, we can give Him glory. A couple weeks ago, a tire on my car was losing pressure. I took it to get looked at and found it had picked up a piece of metal. Was it inconvenient? Yes! But as I drove away I thanked the Lord that it wasn't serious. I thanked Him that it wasn't flat and didn't cause an accident. I thanked Him that it didn't cost anything. We are to give thanks in all things.

The fourth result seen is our reverence for Christ as our “thanks to God the Father for everything” is “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We have been created with the purpose of honoring God with our thanks. He is the recipient of our thanksgiving.

Next we see the reverence in our thanksgiving.

II. THE REVERENCE IN OUR THANKSGIVING – v. 2

Your translation may have either the word worship or serve. Both convey the same meaning. We see it used the same way in Romans 12:1 “I beseech ye, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” (KJV)

“...act of worship.” (NIV)

Service is often used in the OT in connection with Israel's worship. It can speak either to a broader way of life, referring to an overall way of life in that everything we do and how we do it should be seen as an act of worship, or it can refer to a narrow, more personal way of life. In the context of giving God thanks, the Psalmist is using the term in the more narrow sense of the word speaking about the personal activity of praising God. We worship God

by giving Him honor and adoration that He deserves because He is God and we do so with gladness and with joyful songs. That's what the angels and the 24 elders and the 4 living creatures do who are around the throne of God. They continually worship Him because He deserves it, because He is worthy.

Revelation 4:6b-11a

Revelation 7:11-12

Hymn #1 – Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

Hymn #2 – Holy God, We Praise Thy Name

Hymn #3 – Holy, Holy, Holy

Puritan Stephen Charnock called worship “nothing else but rendering to God the honor that is due Him.”

A.W. Tozer wrote that God “wants to cultivate within us the adoration and admiration of which He is worthy. He wants us to be astonished at the inconceivable elevation and magnitude and splendor of Almighty God.”

Psalms 69:30 “I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving.”

Judges 5:9 “Hear this, you kings! Listen, you rulers! I, even I, will sing to the Lord; I will praise the Lord, the God of Israel, in song.”

As we reflect on the person of God, our heart is stirred in reverence. An expression of that stirring is in song. Music prepares the heart and sets the stage to encounter the living God and when we do, we worship Him with thanksgiving.

John MacArthur wrote “Music and liturgy can assist or express a worshipping heart, but they cannot make a non-worshipping heart into a worshipping one. The danger is that they can give a non-worshipping heart the sense of having worshipped. So the crucial factor in worship in the church is not the form of worship, but the state of the hearts of

the saints. If our corporate worship isn't the expression of our individual worshipping lives, it is unacceptable. If you think you can live any way you want and then go to church on Sunday morning and turn on worship with the saints, you're wrong.” It is difficult to be thankful on Sunday if we aren't thankful in the week.

Such an attitude is difficult to reverence God. If we have not prepared the heart during the week to reverence God in praise, then our praise will come from a weak heart.

As we come before God to worship Him, is it with gladness? Is it with joyful singing? Is it with a ready heart? Is it with reverence?

III. THE REALIZATION FOR OUR THANKSGIVING – v. 3

It is impossible to rightly give thanks unless we realize the fact of God, that God exists, that He alone is God and there is none other, and that as God He has made all things including us and not just that He made us but has ownership of us. We belong to Him and He has sovereign rule over us. If we are not first of all thankful for how God has uniquely made us, it will be difficult to express gratitude for who He is and for anything else He gives to us.

Psalms 139:14 “I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made...”

If we are the sheep of His pasture, then we must realize that He is the one who adequately takes care of His sheep. “The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with

oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” (Psalm 23)

When we realize how tenderly the shepherd cares for His sheep, we will express thanksgiving. Such a realization begins when we know who God is and then respond in thanksgiving. Give thanks for His attributes. Omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, immutability, wisdom, sovereignty, love, patience, faithfulness, forgiveness, mercy, grace, infiniteness, goodness, justice, holiness. As we discover more and more about God and His attributes we will be thankful.

IV. THE RESPONSE IN OUR THANKSGIVING – v. 4

In view here is the Temple itself as the worshipper drew ever nearer to the place where he would give thanks to God. As he entered through the gates everything around him pointed to God. Here the psalmist encourages entering the gates with thanksgiving. Maybe that is a good practice for us when we enter these doors to pause and give thanks to God for something. As the worshipper passes through the gates and enters the courtyard he is to do so with praise. God’s name was to be praised. Coming through the gates into the courtyard was movement of the worshipper as he experienced the presence of God, and encountered God in that place.

David Edwards in His book, *Worship Three Sixty Five*, writes, “When we praise God, we are ringing the doorbell, making our presence known, letting Him know that we have come to see Him. When He hears our praise, He gets up to open the door and invites us to come in. When we go inside, we move from praise to worship. In other words, praise is the vehicle into God’s presence, and worship is what we do once we get into God’s presence.” Enter into His presence with thanksgiving and praise. That is the response in our thanksgiving.

V. THE REASON FOR OUR THANKSGIVING – v. 5

Multiple times in the Psalms we read “give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.” How do we come to know the Lord is good? We know it because His mercy (KJV) or love (NIV) continues forever. (Lamentations 3:22-23) It is the same for that generation as it is for this generation and for generations to come. As a matter of fact, it is the same through eternity, it will never change. In that assurance we can give thanks and praise. Every generation can trust the Lord because He does not change.

So here is a word to parents and grandparents. How we worship the Lord today will be how our children and grandchildren worship the Lord tomorrow. Do they know of His mercy and faithfulness? Do they know that the Lord is good all the time? Do they know He will never change? Do they hear you give thanks?

Spurgeon, the prince of preachers, once stated that “so long as we are receivers of mercy, we must be givers of thanks.”

Scholars Keil and Delitzsch state that the mercy of God is the generosity of His love and His faithfulness is the constancy of His love.”

When we come to worship, we come to meet the Almighty King of the Universe and begin with thanks.

Verse 5 sums up God’s character and reminds us that He will never revoke His promises. In that give Him thanks

Psalm 100 is the culmination of a series of Psalms called the royal Psalms. They are Psalm 93, 95-100. It sums up their emphasis on the sovereign rule of God, His goodness to His people, the responsibility of all nations to acknowledge Him,

and the importance of God's people exalting and worshipping Him.

Thanksgiving then becomes an expression of worship.

In 1561 William Kethe took Psalm 100 and put it into a hymn called the *Old Hundredth*. Its tune is to that of the Doxology. Often times the Doxology is sung as a conclusion to the song.

All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.
Him serve with fear, His praise forth tell;
Come ye before Him and rejoice.

The Lord, ye know, is God indeed;
Without our aid He did us make;
We are His folk, He doth us feed,
And for His sheep He doth us take.

O enter then His gates with praise;
Approach with joy His courts unto;
Praise, laud, and bless His Name always,
For it is seemly so to do.

For why? the Lord our God is good;
His mercy is forever sure;
His truth at all times firmly stood,
And shall from age to age endure.

To Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
The God Whom Heaven and earth adore,
From men and from the angel host
Be praise and glory evermore.

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. Amen.

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So what is you are thankful for today?