

Thanksgiving

Psalms 101

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

Thanksgiving is a special time of year. Living in North America there are many reasons to count our blessings with a smile on our face and joy in our hearts. For most thanksgiving is a time of meeting family and having an all you can eat buffet of turkey, ham, potatoes and stuffing smothered in a mountain of gravy, with side dishes of cranberry sauce, corn, beans, pickles and rolls; topped off with apple, lemon, cherry and blueberry pies! And if the food was not enough to get us to smile certainly catching up on the stories of loved ones and getting hugs from them certainly will! As we look upon our thanksgiving feast, we can't help but thank God that we live in a time of relative peace and in a country whose people have more "stuff" than they could ever unpack or use! While it is important to thank God for our families and material possessions how much more important is it to thank our Creator for His existence and undying love to sustain our very lives? This sermon is going to review four steps to giving grateful praise to God: serving God with joy, knowing the Lord as our Shepherd, entering His gates with thanksgiving and remembering that his love and faithfulness endures forever!

Serving God with Joy (verses 1-2)

Illustration: It is at this point that I played a 30 second clip of each of the following songs:

“Another Brick in the Wall” by Pink Floyd
“Hallelujah” by Kate Voegele
“Amazing Grace” – Guy Penrod
“Nessun Dorma,” America’s Got Talent 2019
“God’s Country,” Blake Shelton
“The Thrill is Gone,” B.B. King
“Living Well,” Signum Regis

“MUCH of the sweetness of music lies in the ear to which it is addressed. There are mysterious sweetnesses and unknown harmonies which lurk amid the notes, and are detected only by the ear attuned to melody. The song in itself may embody the soul of delight, and yet it may be misery itself to the ear which is not in tune therewith.”¹

Charles Spurgeon

¹ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Serving the Lord with Gladness.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 13 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1867), 493.

While some of the songs had your foot tapping, heart racing and tongue flapping other songs were irritating and you were grateful when the 30 second clip ended! When we hear a musical genre that we don't like we simply change the station. The same is true when it comes



to which kingdom that we want to serve in. For those whom have been given over to their reprobate minds (Romans 1:28) the mere thought of walking in the footsteps of Christ (1 John 2:6) makes them want to shout with Pink Floyd, "Hey Teacher leave those kids alone." The spirit of this age is too much that of Pharaoh whom asked: "who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?"² Their love of the ways of this world has made many people at best case indifferent to God's existence and at worst loath even the thought of bowing their knee to a

Being that restricts their freedom to live drunk in the sins of their stone, black filled hearts! When offered the "life music" that is filled with love, peace, obedience and grace they simply turn the channel back to the broad path where "self" and gratification are their gods!

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs (verses 1-2)

In sharp contrast with unbelievers, serving the Lord is a "delightful sonnet"³ for those



whom have received the Spirit and mind of Christ (Ephesians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 2:16)! When we think about "worship" we tend to think about singing songs of praise⁴ and reading our Bible but the kind of worship the Psalmist has in mind also includes service⁵ that honors God's gift of life by becoming a living sacrifice unto Him (Romans 12:1)! This means that the words read or sung concerning God

² C. H. Spurgeon, "[Serving the Lord with Gladness.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 13 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1867), 494.

³ C. H. Spurgeon, "[Serving the Lord with Gladness.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 13 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1867), 493.

⁴ Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reyrburn, [A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Psalms](#), UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 852.

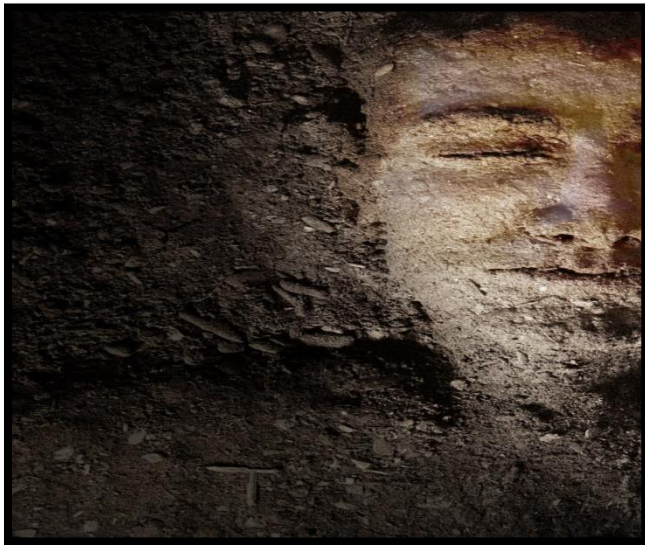
⁵ Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reyrburn, [A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Psalms](#), UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 852–853.

are done so with joy and gratitude⁶ that is so intense that the submission of the heart to the rule of God becomes the basis in which all steps and decisions are made (James 1:22-25). Those who come into the presence of God shout out their allegiance and celebrate the grace they have received.⁷ They are not timid or lukewarm pretenders of the faith but are ambassadors and royal priests of the most High God and as such will not allow anything or anyone stop them from sharing the treasure or pearl they have found to the fallen of this world (Revelation 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:20; 1 Peter 2:9).⁸ And when it comes to obedience all requests from God are welcomed for it truly is an honor to have one's filthy rages (Isaiah 64:6) washed white as snow!

Knowing the Lord as our Shepherd (verse 3)

Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are His; we are His people, the sheep of His pasture.

To keep our worship from becoming an exaltation of one's own singing ability and passions,⁹ grateful praise must be grounded in the truth concerning ourselves and God. When we personify our sinful goals and passions onto a holy God our worship becomes nothing more



than a “rootless gong and clanging cymbal.”¹⁰ “Knowledge is the mother of devotion and of all obedience: blind sacrifices will never please a seeing God.”¹¹ To be a living sacrifice means one's personal worth is to be firmly grounded in God as our Creator. Being made in His image (Genesis 2:7) means we were created in a manner that makes communication and having a relationship with our Father not only possible but desirable. Our true self is only known by the Spirit of God¹² whom has gifted each person to fulfill his/her divine role in His kingdom (1 Corinthians 2:11, chapter 12). What an honor it is for wretches like us to be asked to be the hands and feet of He

⁶ Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 639.

⁷ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 42–106: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 811.

⁸ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 42–106: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 812.

⁹ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (2000–2014)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2014).

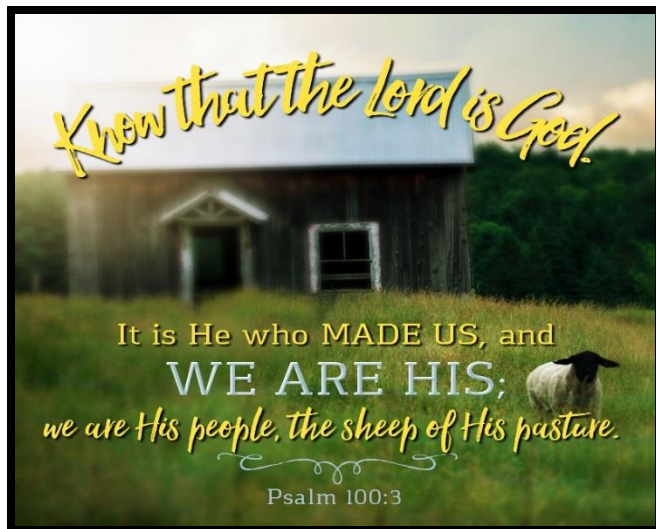
¹⁰ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (2000–2014)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2014).

¹¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 887.

¹² David G. Benner, *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self*, page 109.

who gives and sustains our very lives (Colossians 1:16)!¹³ Praise we jars of clay (2 Corinthians 4:7) that are vulnerable are cared for by He who is sovereign!¹⁴

The truth concerning God is that above all we praise Him for being our Shepherd. “Not only did God make us, He bought us at the price of His Son’s very life (1 Corinthians 6:19–



20”!¹⁵ We do not worship/serve God because He needs anything from His dependent creatures (Acts 17:25) but out of love for and appreciation of the green pastures, still waters and protection He constantly provides His own.¹⁶ He calls us by name (John 10:16) for He has grafted us into the vine and through Christ’s atonement has made us right in God’s sight (Romans 11:11-31)!¹⁷ It is through Christ that we have been delivered from the penalty of sin which is death.¹⁸ Those who are no longer ashamed of the Gospel (Romans 1:16) but believe in Christ’ atonement have eternal life with Him and sovereign grace as their

portion (Psalms 16:5). Since “nothing can cover a naked soul but the righteousness of our Lord Jesus,” we praise Him because we work not for life but from the abundance of life given to us through Him!¹⁹

Entering His Gates with Thanksgiving (verse 4)

Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name.

While verses 1-2 “bring out the joyful acclamation of God’s kingship, verse four stresses the communal act of worship.”²⁰ We are not like the people of Athens in Paul’s day whom

¹³ Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 639.

¹⁴ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (2000–2014)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2014).

¹⁵ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (2000–2014)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2014).

¹⁶ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (2000–2014)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2014).

¹⁷ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (2000–2014)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2014).

¹⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, “*Serving the Lord with Gladness*,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 13 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1867), 495.

¹⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, “*Serving the Lord with Gladness*,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 13 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1867), 496.

²⁰ Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 640.

worshipped “unknown gods” (Acts 17:23).²¹



What God has revealed to us is sufficient to spark faith and show us the way, truth and life (John 14:6) and as a result those who believe are no longer called servants but God’s very own children (John 15:5)! I know that living in North America with an abundance of blessings can make dependence on God difficult, but does not He who sustains our lives deserve our “best love, the warmest confidence, the sternest perseverance, the utmost self-denial ... and a cheerful heart?”²² God whom “called us not in isolation but to be His elect people together”²³ wants us to rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice (Philippians 4:4)!²⁴ Let us shout to

all the earth what God has done for us, let us not give up meeting with one another but encourage each other for the Day of the Lord’s return is vastly approaching (Hebrews 10:25)!

Remembering His Love and Faithfulness Endures Forever (verse 5)

For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Thanksgiving is a holiday that should remind God’s people to praise His holy and



wonderful name! While the endless buffets of all you can eat food and hugs from loved ones are a lot to be thankful for, should not our voices inside of God’s house be one of rejoicing that our Creator and Redeemer’s love and faithfulness will endure forever? While it might seem that His laws harm our freedom to do as we please, who once having tasted His love and protection ever say that they could find a greater joy than serving in the divine role they have been assigned by their best friend and Savior? His love, mercy and faithfulness to Shepherd and provide for

²¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 42–106: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 812.

²² C. H. Spurgeon, “*Serving the Lord with Gladness*,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 13 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1867), 503.

²³ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 42–106: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 814.

²⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, “*Serving the Lord with Gladness*,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 13 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1867), 501.

His own is truly “a fountain that can never be drawn dry!”²⁵ So, let us shout for the joy of the Lord to all the earth this thanksgiving ... our Rock, Fortress and eternal salvation is and will always be Jesus!

²⁵ Matthew Henry, [*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 887.