

READ Psalm 100

Introduction: This week we will have our Thanksgiving holiday. This day was designated as a national holiday by President Abraham Lincoln. Whereas the proclamations were previously "spontaneous", and issued on different days and different months, since Lincoln it has either taken place on the 4th or 10th Thursday of November. One of the interesting facts about the content of the various Presidential and Congressional proclamations is the change of language. While all acknowledge the Almighty God, the language of sin and transgression and the need for forgiveness from God has varied, as well as the recognition of God as revealed through Jesus Christ. Notice, however, the clear word of the first congressional proclamation.

Thanksgiving Proclamation 1777 by the Continental Congress

FORASMUCH as it is the indispensable Duty of all Men to adore the superintending Providence of Almighty God; to acknowledge with Gratitude their Obligation to him for Benefits received, and to implore such farther Blessings as they stand in Need of: And it having pleased him in his abundant Mercy, not only to continue to us the innumerable Bounties of his common Providence; but also to smile upon us in the Prosecution of a just and necessary War, for the Defense and Establishment of our unalienable Rights and Liberties; particularly in that he hath been pleased, in so great a Measure, to prosper the Means used for the Support of our Troops, and to crown our Arms with most signal success:

It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive Powers of these UNITED STATES to set apart THURSDAY, the eighteenth Day of December next, for SOLEMN THANKSGIVING and PRAISE: That at one Time and with one Voice, the good People may express the grateful Feelings of their Hearts, and consecrate themselves to the Service of their Divine Benefactor; and that, together with their sincere Acknowledgments and Offerings, they may join the penitent Confession of their manifold Sins, whereby they had forfeited every Favor; and their humble and earnest Supplication that it may please GOD through the Merits of JESUS CHRIST, mercifully to forgive and blot them out of Remembrance; That it may please him graciously to afford his Blessing on the Governments of these States respectively, and prosper the public Council of the whole: To inspire our Commanders, both by Land and Sea, and all under them, with that Wisdom and Fortitude which may render them fit Instruments, under the Providence of Almighty GOD, to secure for these United States, the greatest of all human Blessings, INDEPENDENCE and PEACE: That it may please him, to prosper the Trade and Manufactures of the People, and the Labor of the Husbandman, that our Land may yield its Increase: To take Schools and Seminaries of Education, so necessary for cultivating the Principles of true Liberty, Virtue and Piety, under his nurturing Hand; and to prosper the Means of Religion, for the promotion and enlargement of that Kingdom, which consisteth "in Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost."

And it is further recommended, That servile Labor, and such Recreation, as, though at other Times innocent, may be unbecoming the Purpose of this Appointment, be omitted on so solemn an Occasion.

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- This is a very glorious and Christ honoring proclamation. While I don't quote this to "prove" anything about our nation, it is clear that there has been a shift. This idea of the need for forgiveness of sins is in many of the later declarations, and while there is an acknowledgement of God's good gifts, the need for God to forgive is mostly absent.
 - Long before this call and proclamation was given to the United States, God through His servant King David made another such proclamation. It is that Psalm that we will consider this morning to direct us as to how and why to give God our thanksgiving.
 - It can be seen by the title "A Psalm of Thanksgiving", that this portion of Scripture is particularly relevant to our subject this morning.

I. THE UNIVERSAL CALL TO THANK AND WORSHIP GOD – vv.1-3a

- There are three commands found in these verses.
- 1.) **Make a joyful shout to the LORD** – this term is used to indicate a war cry of victory, a shout of triumph. The specific object of devotion is the LORD.
- While there are terms in Scripture that can sometimes be used generically (god, lord), this is used specifically as the covenant Name of the God of Israel. There is no one else in Scripture called this. Under the Old Covenant this is the specific and exclusive Name given by which men were to approach God.
- But as God's story continued to unfold, God revealed Himself by another Name, that of Jesus. Similar to how Abram's name was changed to Abraham and Jacob's to Israel, God's further revealing of Himself come through His Son Jesus Christ. [Phil2:9](#) [Eph1:21](#)
- It is therefore right, under the full unveiling of God's plan, to give a cry of victory in the Name of the Lord Jesus for what He has done in providing full redemption for those who trust in Him.
- 2.) **Serve the LORD with gladness** – the term "serve" means to work or labor for. We shouldn't misunderstand this command, for it isn't to serve God as if he were one of the false gods who needs our service. [Act17:25](#)

- So this isn't a call to serve God to supply Him anything, but rather to labor for Him because He is worthy and it is itself an expression of thanks [Col3:17](#).
- 3.) **Come before His presence with singing** – there is a special call that, as we come into God's specially appointed worship as the church, that our mouths should be filled with His praises. But we realize that His presence is not limited to those times. He is present everywhere [Psalm 139:7-12](#).
- What does this mean? It means that the call to thank the Lord through praise is not limited to a certain building or even situation. Paul and Silas understood this [Acts 16:25](#).
- If there is anything that should strike us about this call, it is that it should be **exuberant**. The Psalmist doesn't call people to a quiet and sedate response to the Lord, but a full hearted devotion and appreciation.
- Another thing that we should notice is that this call is **not limited** to only certain "religious" people. He calls on "all you lands." His desire is to see the praise and acknowledgement of God to spread through the entire earth. It is too small a things for only a few people to do this. He is driven by God's glory and greatness, and see that God is worthy of the praise of all people.
- The second way we see this is the acknowledgement that this particular God, the LORD, "has made us, and not we ourselves". So those who are to respond to God in this way are all those who God has created.
- Apart from redemption, apart from being a Christian, there should be the recognition of the fact that we did not make ourselves. We also weren't made by a cosmic accident and the result of millions of years of aimless chaos. Rather, the fact that we are personal and display intelligence shows that we have been created by a personal and intelligent God.
- When he says "know", it is a call to remember and respond appropriately. The fact that you exist is ITSELF sufficient reason to worship and thank God.
- We should remember again that under the fuller revelation of the NT that it is the Son of God revealed through he Lord Jesus Christ who has done this [Col1:16-17](#).
- So this is true of all peoples, and of everyone in this room. Jesus Christ created you, and the reason you exist and continue to enjoy the blessings you do is because of His kindness to you.
- The fact that you could mumble or not even mouth the words of praise in this worship service shows great lack of gratitude to Him. Even apart from salvation, it is a great transgression against this God to not be thankful and acknowledge Him.

II. THE PARTICULAR CALL TO THANK AND WORSHIP GOD – vv.3b

- The Psalmist also tells us that there are a particular people that have even more reason to praise the LORD. He states "*We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.*"
- While it can be said that God care for all His creation, He has a particular care for some among those many. These are those He calls "His people" or His "sheep." He shepherds them in a specific way. This certainly reminds us [Psalm 23](#), the Shepherd Psalm and David's confidence in God's favor and care toward Him.
- But again coming to the NT, we see how the Lord Jesus uses this same imagery to speak of His relationship with His people. Not only are they those who He especially cares for, and lays down His life for, but they are those who hear His voice and follow Him [John10:25-30](#).
- The only way one can know if they are of the sheep of Christ is if they hear His voice (particularly in the Word of God) and follow Him.
- What is the result? Eternal life! They will never perish! No one can snatch them out of His hand!
- If that truth impacted us the way it should, we shouldn't even have to be encouraged to shout with joy, to praise Him, and to come with singing. Nevertheless, God knows of our frequent lethargy and coldness and calls us to enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise.
- This reflects more particular worship language, especially in the gather of God's people who now are the living stones of His living temple where He comes to dwell [1Pet2:5](#).
- Are we not too tame when we come into this place? Is it not possible that our attempts to be reverential and sedate and proper actually undermines the enthusiasm that God calls us to? I'm not talking about a false enthusiasm, but rather heart stirring joy.
- What is the impression others get when they visit us for the first time? What is their impression of our praise?
- And does our thanks and praise to God end when the service ends? Do the praises of God fill our mouths even afterward? (not the false "praise the Lord" of my experience in NJ).

III. THE UNCHANGING REASONS TO THANK AND WORSHIP GOD – v.5

- We have already seen two wonderful reasons to be thankful to God. He has created us and His redeems a people for His own glory. There are three more reasons the Psalmist gives here (as if the other two were not enough).

A. Reason #1 - The LORD is Good

- Our God is not arbitrary. He isn't sometimes good and sometimes bad. He is not good by some sort of outside or external standard, He is the very definition of good. He is right, He is righteous. This word could be translated pleasant, agreeable, excellent. This isn't merely what He does, it is what He IS.
- This is great news because of the reality of His sovereignty. What I mean is that He is in control of all things. While all things that happen aren't good, all that God does in His world is good and even what is bad He works for good Rom8:28.
- Notice is this is a particular promise to those who love Him. So as a Christian, we are to constantly to call this to mind, that even those things which are so difficult in a fallen world, even the temporary consequences of our sins are redeemed of the Lord and work for good.

B. Reason #2 - His Mercy *is* Everlasting

- The term used here means loving-kindness or faithfulness. This is more than compassion. Compassion is the inward disposition of sorrow or sadness toward someone in a bad condition. But it is not, in and of itself, mercy.
- Mercy is responding to someone's sinful condition as a rebel against God with favor and love, particularly in forgiveness. Compassion is what I feel for a suffering enemy, mercy is forgiving my enemy for the wrong they have done and doing good to them.
- God's mercy includes reconciliation and forgiveness. And this mercy, we are told, is everlasting. It is perpetual and unrelenting. This is good news when we sin and fail to do what God calls us to do.

C. Reason #3 - And His Truth *Endures* to All Generations.

- This last thing the Psalmist mentions is in relation to God's Truth. Despite the fact that everyone from academics to the man on the street are denying the existence of truth, something that is absolute and above and beyond us that gives definition and direction to all of reality, the Truth of God continues on.
- In the sight of God all of the activities done that try to deny truth are like little people with Nerf hammers trying to destroy a mountain. After they have wielded their weapons and walk away feeling victorious, God's truth stands as steadfast as ever. This is particularly true of God's Truth revealed in the Holy Scriptures John17:17.
- In what is known as the Post-Modern era in which we live where academic journals, philosophy, news reports, and every other creation of man is used to try to undermine the Word of God, they are but futile attempts to destroy the trustworthiness of the Bible.
- But we are called to praise the Lord because standing above the cesspool of human ideas is the mountain of God standing firm and true.
- As the people of God, regardless of our particular circumstances and difficulties, do we not have abundant reason to be thankful? We surely should be thankful for temporal blessings if we have them: good health, a good job, a faithful spouse, children, shelter, food, clothing, and a host of other things. But these things can and do change. But the Word of God points us to the most foundational things.
- How can we be a thankful people? It won't be by only being thankful when those temporal blessings exist. Rather it will be by building our house on the rock of these things rather than the shifting sand of the circumstances of life.
- Here is one antidote for things like anxiety, depression, unthankfulness, grumbling, complaining, and generally living in a miserable disposition. It is these things that Jesus
- May we be sure, in this Thanksgiving season, to have a thankfulness that transcends that of the man or woman who is only mindful of the things of this world.

Sing "Praise to the LORD"