

# ChristReformationChurch

Tillamook, Oregon

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*Thank Him and Bless His Name*

*Thanksgiving Sunday*

*November 25, 2018*

**Sermon Text:** Romans 1:16-25

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 50

Psa 100:1-5 A Psalm for giving thanks. Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! (2) Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! (3) Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. (4) Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! (5) For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

As this is the Thanksgiving season I thought it would be appropriate and

fitting for us to consider this matter of giving thanks to the Lord this morning.

The Sin of Unthankfulness and Why we Owe Thanksgiving to God

Let me begin by saying that a real Christian IS thankful to Christ. I do not need to badger you into giving Him thanks. We all need to be reminded once in a while, but the truth is that a genuine child of God, led by His Spirit, *is a very thankful person.*

Eph 5:18-21 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, (19) addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, (20) giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, (21) submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Now, this was not always true of us. Man the sinner is not thankful to God. Here is the classic Scripture that

exposes this sin and shows us just how terrible it is and what motivates it:

Rom 1:16-25 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (17) For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

(18) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. (19) For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

(20) For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

(21) **For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him,** but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (22) Claiming to be wise, they became fools, (23) and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. (24) Therefore God gave them up in the

lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, (25) because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

When I was in seminary, it was a time of a big "fad" about worship. Everyone wanted to talk about how to "do" worship. I remember the North American Baptist Conference regional minister announcing at a conference, "if you men want to know how to do worship, just go visit pastor so and so's church – they do it right over there." Well, in saying something like that he was necessarily denying true worship by focusing attention on the hotshot preacher and his "worship team" instead of upon the Lord.

Worship, as you can see here in Romans, entails two basics:

- acknowledging God, and
- giving thanks to God.

The sinner, who knows full well that God is Creator, that God IS, and that man owes the Creator thanksgiving, refuses to even acknowledge Him let alone thank Him. To thank God is to acknowledge God and that means to acknowledge that the creature owes everything to the Creator. Man, as Paul

says, refuses to do so and instead fashions every kind of idol he can to worship and thank.

Notice how serious this sin is. In fact, it is the fundamental sin for which God pours out His wrath upon the sinner. Refusing to acknowledge that God is God and we are not. Refusing to give thanks to God for all that we are and all that we have and for all that He is.

Why should we remember the Lord's Day and keep it holy? Why should we gather together on the Lord's Day to hear from His Word, to sing praise to Him? *Because He is our Creator. Because everything we have comes from Him. Because He is beautiful and holy and mighty. And because He has given us a great Savior in His Son.* To refuse to do so, to be careless about worship, is to participate in the god of this world, behaving as if we are his people.

***The most terrible sin a human being can commit, the sin which arouses the wrath of God more than any other, is to live one's life as if God either does not exist, or if He does, as if He is irrelevant to me.***

The Lord does not wait until the Day of Judgment to effect judgment upon those who walk in this sin. Note what Paul says again:

(24) Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, (25) because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

### Enter His Gates With Thanksgiving

Let's turn then to the believer's worship of God and specifically worship through the giving of thanks. Hear the Psalmist once again:

Psa 100:1-5 A Psalm for giving thanks. Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! (2) Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! (3) Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. (4) Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! (5) For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

How many times do the Psalms speak of giving thanks to God? Over and over again. Thanks for who He is. Thanks for what He has done. This particular Psalm, the 100<sup>th</sup>, has thanksgiving as its theme. It is a call to thanksgiving. And it provides reasons for giving thanks to God which are

essentially the same as Paul mentions in Romans 1 –

- God is God.
- God is our Creator
- We belong to Him, his people, his sheep
- He is good to us
- He loves us
- He is faithful to us
- His goodness, love and faithfulness to us is *never ending*

So, we come as His church to give Him thanks and to bless His name. That is to say, to count as a blessing all that God is, as opposed to the wicked who hate Him and curse His name.

### For the Lord is Good

I want to spend the rest of our time thinking more about this last verse:

Psa 100:5 For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

God is *good*. The 136<sup>th</sup> Psalm is basically 26 verses of a rehearsing of this very truth – that God is good, that His mercy is everlasting:

Psa 136:1-8 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. (2) Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love

endures forever. (3) Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever; (4) to him who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures forever; (5) to him who by understanding made the heavens, for his steadfast love endures forever; (6) to him who spread out the earth above the waters, for his steadfast love endures forever; (7) to him who made the great lights, for his steadfast love endures forever; (8) the sun to rule over the day, for his steadfast love endures forever;

What does it mean? The word seems so simply – *good*. But the more you think it over, the statement “God is good” is not quite so simple. It is in fact, very profound and deep. You see this here:

Mar 10:18 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

And perhaps these verses help:

3Jn 1:11 Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.

*Good is the opposite of evil. Good is that which is right, that which blesses and nourishes. Many of God's other attributes really flow from the fact that He is good: His love, His justice, His*

holiness and so on. So that everything God *is* and everything God *does* is good. God is incapable of doing a *bad* thing. Or of giving a *bad* gift:

Jas 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

And again:

Luk 11:9-13 And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (10) For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. (11) What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; (12) or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? (13) If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

We creatures therefore owe God thanksgiving *for His goodness*, as the Psalmist calls upon us to give. We can never “answer back to God” and question the goodness of anything He does or gives. Many things God does are a mystery to us, but we must never doubt that they are always *good*. God cannot do or give what is evil.

Winston Churchill, who was certainly not a Christian though he apparently did acknowledge the existence of God, was once going through a very serious trial during the Second World War. One of his aids said, maybe thinking of God – “perhaps this is a blessing in disguise.” Churchill’s response was “well, if it is, it is certainly a very good disguise.” Ha!

Well, we have all felt that way at one time or another, right? The thing may have some silver lining, but we sure don’t see it at the moment and in fact sometimes we never see it. Evil and bad things do come our way, but they never originate in God Himself. Consider this very familiar verse (but rarely understood rightly) –

Rom 8:28-29 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (29) For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

All things. That includes bad things. But notice that bad or evil things do not originate in the being of God. That is impossible, for God is perfectly good and incapable of evil. However, in His goodness toward us, he “flips” and uses all things, including evil

things, for our good. And that “good” is explained in verse 29 – our sanctification – becoming more and more conformed to the image of Christ. God is so perfectly good in His love for His people that He turns even the evil things in this fallen world for our good.

Understand? This *does not mean that the evil thing is not an evil thing!* The world is filled with evil things and evil people. If a pipe breaks in my house, that is an evil thing. Yep. If my dog chews up my new coat, that is an evil thing no matter how much I love my dog. If I catch a cold, that is an evil thing. Death is an evil thing. Storms are evil things. Disease is an evil thing. But *not one single thing on this list of evils originates in God.* My sin is evil, but I cannot blame God for it:

Jas 1:13-14 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. (14) But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

God is good. Always. Perfectly. And we can and must give Him thanks for it.

Psalm 100:4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his

name! (5) For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Now, let's close with one final note on the goodness of God. One of the chief ways God's goodness is expressed is in His *mercy*. Listen to this account of the Lord revealing Himself to Moses:

Exo 33:18-23 Moses said, "Please show me your glory." (19) And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. (20) But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." (21) And the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, (22) and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. (23) Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."

And when the Lord came by, this is what His goodness looked like:

Exo 34:5-7 The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. (6) The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the

LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, (7) keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

God is *good*. Do you believe that? His goodness toward His people is beyond our imagination. He is merciful. He is gracious. He is faithful. And He is *good* when He judges the wicked and visits their iniquity upon them. That is to say, the grace of God is good, and the justice of God is good.

And we can and must give Him thanks for everything that He is.