

A THANKSGIVING PSALM (PSALM 138:1-8)

Since tomorrow is Thanksgiving, I thought we would look at a Thanksgiving Psalm written by David. The Hebrew text begins with the superscription “of David.”

David faced some tough things in life. His life was filled with many battles, wars, threats, obstacles, setbacks, sins and failures. There were times when David was hated and hounded for doing the will of God. He was pursued and persecuted. He was chased up mountains, down in valleys and he hid in caves. He even had to flee to a foreign country for survival.

There were times when he was threatened and felt all alone. But through all of this, he never lost his desire to thank God and praise God.

In fact, when we read the first two verses, we see what David says he will do:

- 1) He will give God thanks.
- 2) He will sing praises to God.
- 3) He will bow down before God.
- 4) He will give thanks to God’s name.

So what we conclude is this:

**ONE WHO WILL SEE GOD DO GREAT THINGS WILL BE ONE WHO THANKS
GOD AND PRAISES GOD AT ALL TIMES AND IN ALL SITUATIONS.**

The Psalm opens with David saying in **verse 1** that he will do this “with all my heart.” So this is not some half-hearted effort. To actually thank God from all of one’s heart means:

- 1) There are no sin closets in the heart.
- 2) There are no faith doubts in the heart.
- 3) There are no priority blocks in the heart.

He also adds in **verse 1** “I will sing praises to You before the gods.” That may mean several things:

- 1) David would thank God and praise the God of the Bible before all of the angels.
- 2) David would thank God and praise the God of the Bible before all of the religions.
- 3) David would thank God and praise the God of the Bible before all of the leaders.

He also adds in **verse 2** that “I will bow down toward your holy temple.” He literally would kneel down and bow down facing Jerusalem. Often times he lived away from there, but he kept it in his mind and his worship. The tabernacle was there; the Temple would be there.

He mentions in **verse 2** that “I will give thanks to your name.” The name that David uses in this Psalm is Jehovah (LORD). The point is David would thank the only true God who was the covenant God of Israel and the God revealed in the word of God.

Now what David does is give a series of fourteen reasons why he will give thanks to God:

REASON #1 – Because of God’s lovingkindness. **138:2a**

The Hebrew word is hesed. He uses the word here and also at the end of this Psalm. This word carries with it the idea of God loving something and being kind to something and showing mercy and pity to something that is in a hopeless and helpless situation (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 294). This word also emphasizes a zeal and desire to do this.

This is something that God’s people can thank God for, every day of their life. The sovereign, holy, Almighty God took an earnest interest in us and saw us as hopeless and pitiable and mercifully reached into our lives. We can thank God for that.

REASON #2 – Because of God’s truth. **138:2b**

God is truth and God’s word is truth. God cannot lie. We live in a world of liars. We have to check facts and double check things because this is the way the world is. God does not lie. God is a God of truth. His word is truth. That is something for which we may always praise God.

REASON #3 – Because of God’s word. **138:2**

Now I want you to see what is stated here. In the mind of God, the word of God is magnified to the same level as the name of God.

God has given us His word and His word is that which reveals and magnifies all things about God. This is so important to see.

Real praise worship that is viewed as praise worship in God’s sight is a service in which the word of God is taken very seriously. People who are right with God magnify the word of God. That is what they want when they go to church.

REASON #4 – Because God answers prayer. **138:3a**

This is an amazing thought for which we may always thank God. God answers the prayers of His people. Furthermore, the context of many of the prayers is in times of trouble and trial.

There are times and days when we cry out to God for help and it is amazing to think that God does answer us. It may not be in the way we expect Him to answer, but He does answer.

REASON #5 – Because God gives strength. **138:3b**

God is the God who can give boldness and strength to His people when they are hurting and weak. The emphasis is that God gives this coping strength. Not the world, not other people, not circumstances, but God. **Notice where the strength is given, to the soul.**

REASON #6 – Because God will humble all political leaders of the world. **138:4-5**

There will come a day when all political leaders of the world will honor God. Notice what is predicted “ALL...WILL,” not “All might.” All political leaders will one day be forced to honor and worship the God of the Bible. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess the truth. This will be fully fulfilled during the reign of Jesus Christ in the Millennium.

REASON #7 – Because God is close to the lowly. **138:6a**

What a marvelous truth this is. God is close to the humble, the contrite and the lowly. This is so foreign to this world. This world promotes the opposites kind of person, but God promotes the lowly.

REASON #8 – Because God is far away from the haughty. **138:6b**

God is far removed from the arrogant, proud and dominant. Notice carefully what is said here—God does know these haughty, arrogant frauds. He sees them and He knows them. He will never be close to them and never do much of anything with them except eventually destroy them.

REASON #9 – Because God revives His people in times of trouble. **138:7a**

God delights in reviving and restoring and encouraging His people when they are walking in the midst of trouble and trials and distress.

Think about this. David is writing this Psalm and when he sinned against God, he reached the lowest point of his life and God revived him from that.

REASON #10 – Because God will protect and defend His people from enemies. **138:7b**

God knew who David’s enemies were and He knows who our enemies are. He sees them and monitors them and He takes a Personal interest in His people. The text says He actually “stretches out His hand” against the enemies and preserves, protects and defends His people.

REASON #11 – Because God will save His people. **138:7c**

Do not miss the theology of this verse. It is God who saves. We do not and cannot save ourselves. It is God who must save us. David says God’s right hand saves us.

Now who is seated at the right hand of God? Hebrews 10:12-13 says Jesus is seated at the right hand of God. He is our Savior. He is the only One who can save us.

REASON #12 – Because God will accomplish everything concerning each individual. **138:8a**

Don’t miss this. David said I can give thanks to God and praise God because I know He will accomplish specific things pertaining to me. He will do the same for every one of His people. Now of course the assumption is the people are thanking God and praising God. They are serious about the word of God. God says, I’ll accomplish My plan for that person’s life.

God is the One who wants to work in the life of His people to accomplish great things.

REASON #13 – Because God’s lovingkindness is everlasting for His people. **138:8b**

David again comes back to the mercy of God. What he adds here is that the mercy of God is everlasting.

REASON #14 – Because God will never forsake the works of His hands. **138:8c**

Here is eternal security. God will never forsake the work of His hands and those who love Him and thank Him and praise Him are the works of His hands.